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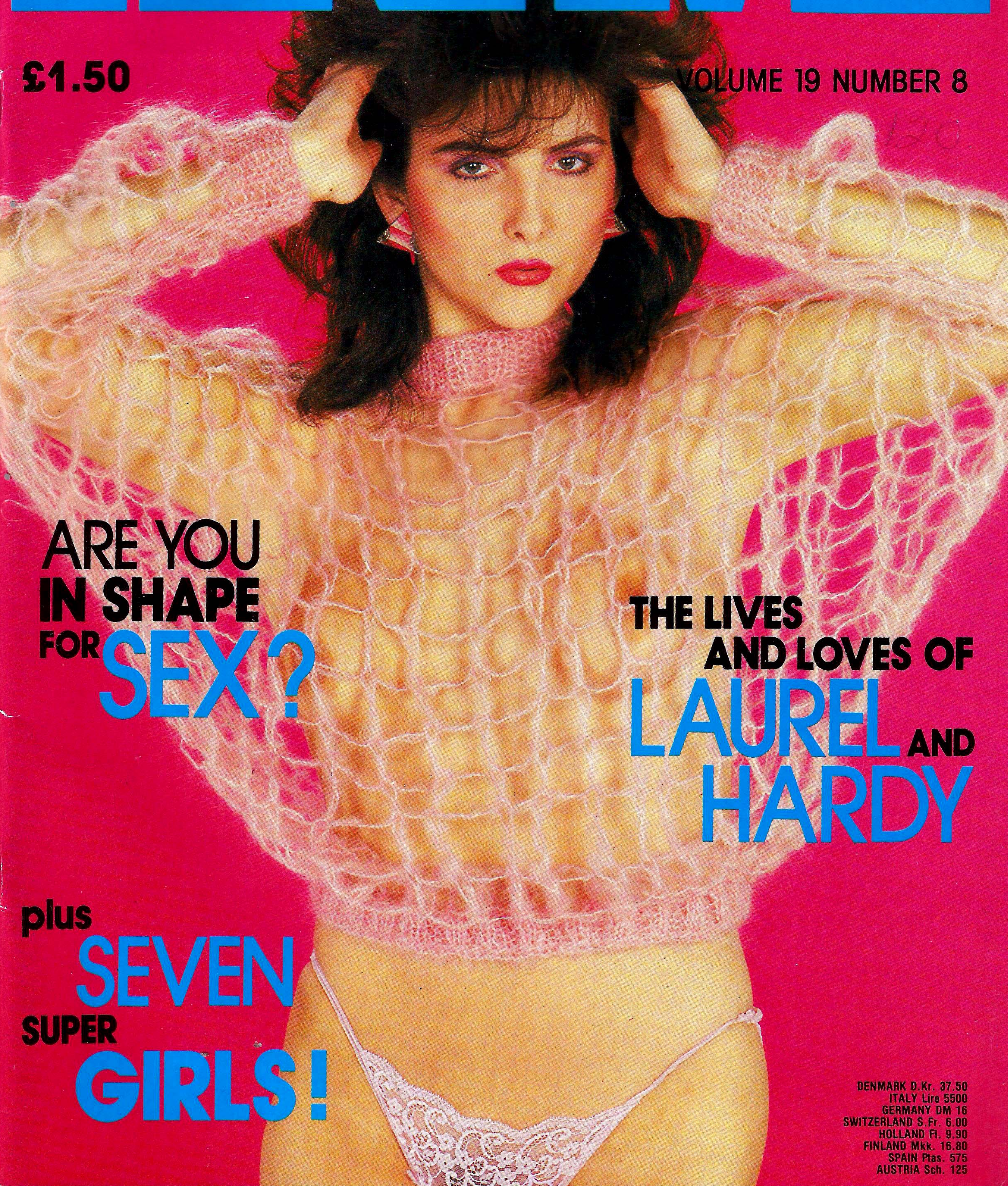

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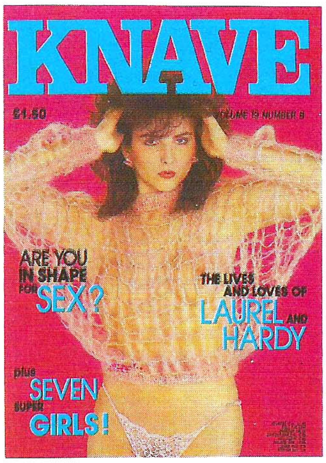
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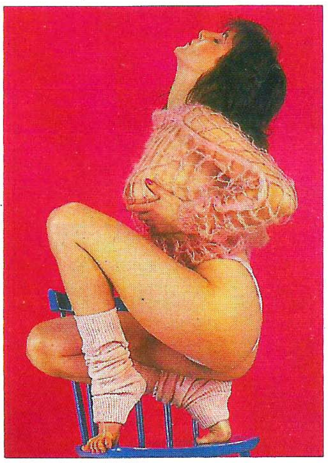

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Girl CHAT

This is the bit where we take ourselves even less seriously than in the rest of the magazine. As well as looking at a sample of every girl in the issue (and using the 'caught off guard' shots where available) our man propping up the bar at the Grievous Bodily Arms, W.F. Guttersnipe, delves into the drivelling depths of the so-called 'girlie blurbs' and tells the sordid truth about the thirty-strong team of addle-brained hierophants who stand in for an infinite number of monkeys and write them. From the Senior Arch-blurb Director to the Boy On a Youth Training Scheme Who Fills In When the Assistant Vice-deputy Blurb Researcher Is Having An Acne Attack, from El Gutto the obese Editor to El Blotto his tosspot assistant – all are libelled in equal and fearless measure. Then we have the section where W.F.G. takes an irreverent look at the sillier stories sent to us from local newspapers around the country and the national press. Don't forget – you can earn yourself £20 by sending us a funny newspaper cutting which we can use in this column. (Send your crazy cuttings to W.F. Guttersnipe, Knave, PO Box 312, Witham, Essex CM8 3SZ.) Read on . . . !

THE FINAL WORD

One disappointment in the 'death file', though. As I re-inspected a small cutting from the same year, datelined Tehran and "Thatcher 'erased'", it turned out that the authorities had merely painted out an unflattering caricature of the Iron Lady from the wall of the old British Embassy in an attempt to improve diplomatic relations. Still, if they had wiped her out in person, I suppose we'd have noticed by now . . .

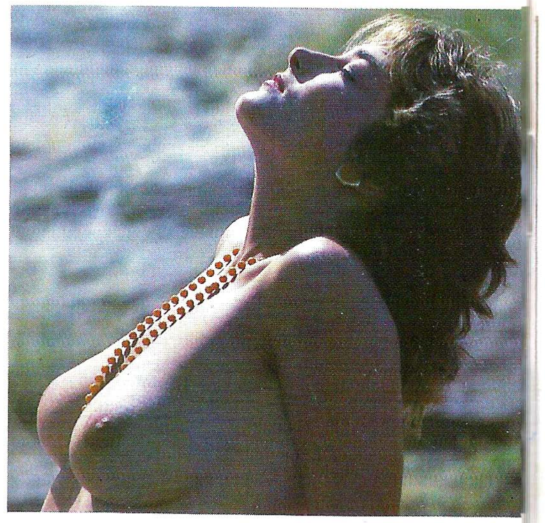
FAST OFF THE MARK

The athletic young thing who obviously misunderstood the Editor's suggestion that she "try making a few bob in the girlie magazine racket" is Polly. The ever-erudite (cough) Assistant Editor has sought for words beginning with 'P' with which to describe her, but complains that the relevant page of his dictionary is missing. I have seen that volume before. It is the famous *Greater Sun-reader's Dictionary*, so the missing folio must be the one covering the letters N to Z.

Polly is said to be an accomplished sprinter (she certainly looks like a fast mover to me) and in a challenge with El Gutto left him gasping only centimetres from the blocks. This comes as no surprise. The Editor's idea of runs is something you get the morning after seven pints and a special chilli con carne at the Grievous Bodily Arms.

HOWLING HYENAS

Considering she's pointing a couple of gems at the camera, it almost seems churlish to describe Lena as the one with the orange jewellery. She and photographer Austin Legrew were packed off to Africa for this shoot, which prevents the Junior Vice Blurb Operative from making his usual claims that he and the model took part in Ugandan discussions after the day's photography. Whether, as in the Ian Dury song, "A seasoned up hyena could not have been more obscener" only the photographer can tell, and he's keeping extraordinarily quiet. Bastard!



SENILE STAFF

The superannuated hippie of an Assistant Editor was hoping that the name Eleanor would spark photographer Roberto Rocchi into a set based on the old Lindisfarne song. The reason it didn't is not – as you may suppose – that the bearded buffoon and I are the only pair on the Knave staff who can recall the hits of May 1972, but rather that the rest of the senescent nincompoops haven't yet noticed the passing of the sixties. Judging by the fact that he always seems to be whistling *All I want for Christmas is a Beatle*, the photographer thinks it's still in the charts.

The roller skates – no one can explain. Eleanor dangling from the drapes is easier. When attempting to sound forceful, El Gutto the gross Editor is prone to slip into the patois of the Chicago gangster, hoping to sound like a cross between Humphrey Bogart and Edward G. Robinson (despite looking more like Sydney Greenstreet). "Any more roller skates," he told Rocchi, "and it's curtains . . ." On any other magazine the owners would despair.

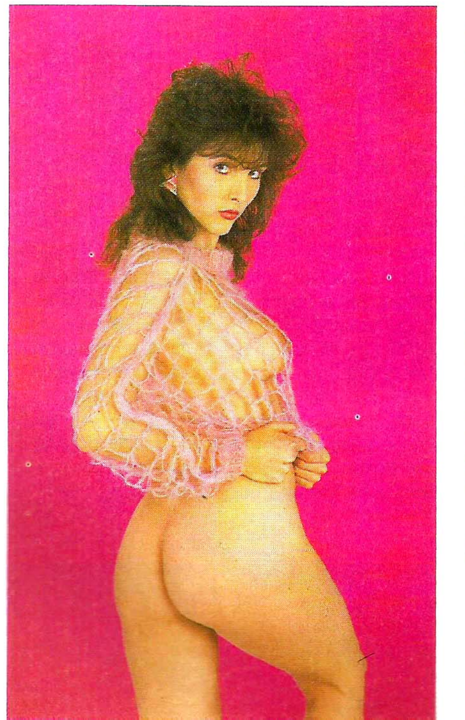
NATIONAL CRISIS

Speaking of roses, the delicious creature tickling her chin with one is Kama. Apart from being that of an Indian god of love, the name also means – and I papraphrase – 'thinking mucky thoughts'. Seems fair enough to me, though why it needs to be said in Sanskrit is a mystery, particularly when she's reckoned to be Ecuadorian! According to the Senior Assistant Blurb Writer's Buttock Polisher, this nationality is supposed to be the 'concept' behind the colours in the set. One rarely believes these cretins in matters academic, but thumbing through my somewhat idiosyncratic library I pulled out the Admiralty-approved Manual of Seamanship 1943 (bought by the Editor when pissed in mistake for an encyclopedia on spunk), looked up the colours of Ecuador's men of war and damn me if he wasn't right. Give the man a coconut.

VESTED INTERESTS

Where better to start our run-down of the beauties featured in this month's issue than with Hellene – the girl in the heavily ventilated knitwear. My first reaction to this woollen oddity was to suppose that it was the dim studio assistant's misconstrued attempt to satisfy a reader's perverted request to see pictures of 'a girl who had taken holy orders'; then it occurred to me that some fool had taken the Galaxy wardrobe department's resident moths on a day visit to one of Britain's ever-so-safe-honest-guv nuclear power stations; or even that it was a joke – a piece of knit-wit, so to speak.

Apparently though, this new concept in sweaters – the viewer perspires rather more than the occupant – was discovered by the office cat and excited what passes for the imaginations of the set designers. "They try," sighs the blurb writer, "bless their little cotton socks." Fishnet socks, no doubt.



ALL TOO MORTAL

Readers with memories longer than their plonkers may recall that one of the very first columns I ever wrote for this flaccid organ reviewed umpteen bizarre methods which people had chosen (or had thrust upon them) as their routes off this mortal coil, including the wonderful – though not for them – tale of the live sex act crushed when the piano they were humping on rose to the ceiling on hydraulic jacks. Ugh!

Time, I reckon, to add a few new ones to the list. Deaths at sporting fixtures are not unknown – South America has a history of fatalities at soccer matches, usually involving members of the crowd shooting referees (and in recent years Britain has taken up the reins for perpetrating violence at such venues), while one is used to reading of riot casualties at cricket matches on the subcontinent. But what about kite-flying festivals?

At such an event in Ahmadabad, Western India in January '86, at least seven died and 29 more were injured in street battles when arguments broke out about people's kites. What could this apparently innocuous pastime possibly involve to arouse such passions, I wonder? And do supporters kit themselves out with scarves and caps and wander the highways and byways singing *Earwigo, You'll Never Walk Again* or even *Harry Roberts Is Our Friend*? I suppose we shall never know.

Girl CHAT

ANIMAL DEATH

In Bangladesh, apart from climatic disasters which strike from time to time, elephants remain a danger to life and limb. Last summer five people cashed in their chips when rogue pachyderms in the chittagong district went on the rampage for two nights running, uprooting trees, flattening houses, stomping on crops and generally behaving for all the world like Leeds United supporters after a rainy 0-0 draw where the linesman was ignorant of the offside laws.

In the Amazon region of Brazil, though, where there are no elephants to steer clear of, herds of rogue taxi drivers are equally to be avoided. In July 1986 a veritable army of 250 cabbies burst into a nick, beat a murder suspect to death and seriously injured a second. Mind you, in London they're at least that dangerous individually.

WINDOW DRESSING

Contrary to the opinion of many readers, I am not always able to sit out of camera shot in the studio and slobber while the models take their clothes off. This I generally have to leave to El Gutto himself, hence the legend on the Galaxy gents' wall: 'Knave Editors drool OK'. No, some of us have to work for a living, and sometimes all this humble scribe is given to work with is an illiterately typed blurb and one picture. With Trixie, one is faced with one of those subjects that makes the brain swim: the only photograph I have is of a blonde in a white blouse on a red bed, but the blurb is all about shop windows. Is she a special offer in the Harridges sale? Is there a sign by her directing customers to 'Nipple Department 4th floor'? What is the answer to the question 'How's Trix?' I suppose we'll all have to turn to page ?? and find out.

DECEASED DOWN UNDER

Over in Australia, and in April '86 a 20 year old would-be robber found a novel way of pegging out when attempting to enter a Perth supermarket via the roof. The building gave way under him and he landed head-first on a frozen food display, which gives a new twist to the old American G-man movie phrase aobut 'putting the criminals on ice'.

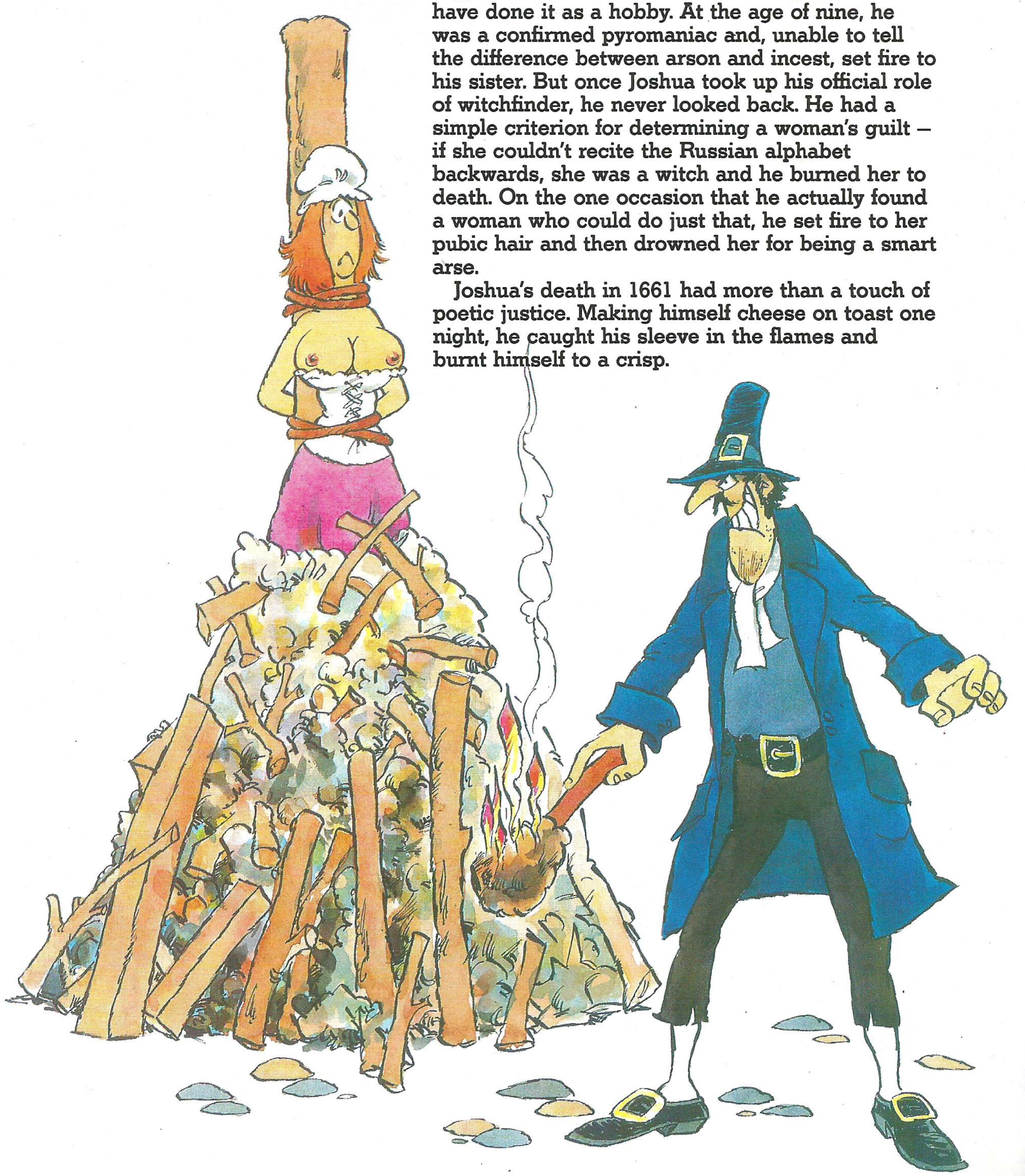
A couple of months later, and in the same part of the world, a 49 year old woman was acquitted (though sent to the worm farm) after she claimed that it was angels who had told her to cut her husband's throat and hack him into little pieces. What, Hell's Angels?

PUN PULLING POWER

Posed before the art deco lamp is this month's Amateur Model, Susan Lomas. If you feel any temptation to describe her as an English rose, watch your step – you could be raising more controversey than you can handle. Susan is a Lancashire lass who has swapped her red rose for a white one and moved to Yorkshire, which I always imagined was as popular a thing to do as switching sides in the middle of a war. Susan is a barmaid in Leeds, which makes a certain amount of sense. She undoubtedly looks as if she'd have no touble pulling . . .

KNAVEL HISTORY

(A SERIES OF KNAVES AND BOUNDERS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS)



JOSHUA THE WITCHFINDER (1610-1661)

If ever a man had found his true vocation in life, it was Joshua the witchfinder. Had he not been employed to burn witches for a living, he would have done it as a hobby. At the age of nine, he was a confirmed pyromaniac and, unable to tell the difference between arson and incest, set fire to his sister. But once Joshua took up his official role of witchfinder, he never looked back. He had a simple criterion for determining a woman's guilt – if she couldn't recite the Russian alphabet backwards, she was a witch and he burned her to death. On the one occasion that he actually found a woman who could do just that, he set fire to her pubic hair and then drowned her for being a smart arse.

Joshua's death in 1661 had more than a touch of poetic justice. Making himself cheese on toast one night, he caught his sleeve in the flames and burnt himself to a crisp.

ELEANOR

With a name like Eleanor you would have thought that the photographer would have a field day. Remember the old Lindisfarne song — all that stuff about a belly dancing beauty with a power driven saw . . . and the bit about lust and base desire? Great imagery, that. Great theme for a day's shooting. So what did the photographer do? He went and bunged Eleanor on a bed, dug out the old lingerie and a pair of roller skates, painted his living room and scattered a few roses around the place! It makes you despair.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBERTO ROCCHI

trixie

The adrenalin is still coursing through our feeble veins after our adventures with Trixie. Perhaps, we thought, instead of buying all those expensive props from well known high-street stores and carrying the bloody things into the studio just to make the studio look like a shop window . . . . why don't we save everyone a lot of time and trouble and take the photos in a shop window in the first place? The arresting officer was quite good about the whole affair. He even agreed to forget about our legal advisors less than generous attempt at bribery. It's a hell of a life . . . working on the edge. I hope you all appreciate the dangers we intrepid journos face in our bold attempts to brighten your month.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GERTH SERNELIN

TEST DRIVE

THE BEST 4x4xFAR
LAND ROVER
D446 BDU
Land Rover UK Ltd
LAND ROVER
TURBO
LAND ROVER
LAND ROVER

Invigorated and only slightly bruised after a hard day's bouncing off trees, fording rivers, crossing mountain ranges etc., the intrepid ROBERT DUDLEY puts pen to paper and raves about the Land Rover Turbo Diesel.

You know how it is. Some smart arse has a brainwave and the whole of humanity is made to suffer. So what's new? History is full of such barmy brainstorms. Who can forget Romanian Vlad's pioneering experiments in acupuncture? Or Napoleon's attempt to form an EEC-style European trade bloc and kick off the whole wine lake/butter mountain caper nearly 200 years before its time? Such schemes are the playthings of madmen and fools. Paranoics straining against the encroachment of dementia. Lunatics seeking sanity through comittment to 'the ultimate scheme.' Unfortunately, it's a known fact that such High Profile Knuckleheads tend to get away with it. What's the alternative? Exactly. At the end of the day it's a straight choice between going along with the twisted ideas . . . or simply shooting them and hiding their bodies.

In this case perhaps we'd have been better off going for the latter option. It sort of happened like this . . .

Little more than a couple of weeks ago, El Gutto, sweaty helmsman of a certain organ, awoke from an alcohol-induced stupor with a Slug-like grunt and the bizarre notion that a test-driven Land Rover (i.e., the finest off-roader this or any country has been produced) could prove: "a valuable addition to the pages of Knave". Sounds impressive put like that. What the grimy Gut-rot really meant was that a hastily concocted spiel on the pride of Solihull might be used to fill a hefty chunk of a forthcoming issue severly depleted by the non-appearance of models brassed off by the bulbous El G's incessant and oleaginous *(Do what? — Ed.)* pawings.

Major protestations, rightly so. After all, it's the sort of thing that could give our venerable 4X4 a bad name.

Worse was to come.

"No, listen," said the pickled publishing person, "I shee it like thish. What we do ish get hold of one of theeshe (hiccup) Landrovers, find shome fields . . . and then . . .(long, hungover pause) . . . have shome fun."

God forbid. We all know El Gutto's idea of fun. There are, reputedly, large volumes of police records bulging with the tawdry details of this person's 'leisure-time activities'. Grown men have been known to blanch at the mere mention of Good Sir G and 'fun' in the same breath. It's easy, now, to see why. In a nutshell, the Gutto Plan involved proving the off—road capabilities of the seasoned 'Landie' to an extent never previously contemplated, let alone undertaken. Forget the rigours of the Paris-Dakar rally: the school egg and spoon race is tougher. The name of the game here would be pure, unabashed Ramboitis. Good, vigorous fun. See what the Land Rover can make of a few ponds and ditches. Bounce the thing off the odd tree. You know the sort of thing. Separate the men from the boy racers. Terrific. And who picks up the tab when Land Rover's PR heavies show up armed with chain saws and machetes, looking for the psycho who wrecked their machine? Not our Gutto. Rather, it would be the honourable Mr Dudley's gonads which would be well and truly in the grinder.

Obviously there was no alternative but to give such editorial suggestions the finger *(Looked more like two fingers from where I was standing! — Ed.)*.

Ultimately a compromise was decided upon, whereby evaluation of the legendary off-roader could be conducted in rather more civilized a manner. Testing would be rigorous, indeed, but without recourse to needless assaults on the environment and wanton physical/mechanical damage to the vehicle in question. Everyone would remain bodily intact, Gutto would get his filler-feature and four-drive's finest would live to see another day's Green Laneing in the wilds of Invernesshire or muddy Sussex. That at least was the theory. Reality, as they say, turned out to be stranger than the dream . . .

Lest it be suggested that the following account is something of an anti-climax, let it be stated here and now that nobody actually died during the testing of the trusty 'Rover *and* that the vehicle was returned to Solihull intact — in a pretty disgusting state, admittedly but intact nonetheless.

Okay, so the big question to start with

TEST DRIVE

continued from previous page

is: "Why test drive a Land Rover in the first place?" After all the light-alloy-bodied beasts have been soldiering on (pun intended — Armed Forces are a major customer) for nigh on forty years. They started as a creation of necessity — steel was in short supply in the early post-war years — and endured as a rugged reminder of the 'make do' mentality of yesteryear. Doubters and all-drive Jappie-fanciers claim that one crate-carcassed Landie is pretty much identical to the next, and with BL refusing to spend a dime on development, the once all-conquering all-drive creation has pretty well missed the boat in terms of sophistication and adaptation to the needs of the modern user.

What a bunch of nonsense. Granted there is more than a hint of truth in the suggestion that the Land Rover is a tough and uncompromising operator, and no-one would deny that it had never really been allocated the funds needed to combat the threat from the East. That's as far as it goes. In every other respect the machine has indisputably come on enormously since those far off days of post-war austerity. This is particularly so of late, during which time it has benefitted to no little extent from the establishment of a separate Land Rover division within the diverse Leyland empire.

Nowhere is this development more apparent than in the mechanical make-up of the four-paw-powered favourite. Let's start with the undercarriage. The first fruit of the new regime was a completely revised suspension package derived from a modified version of that used by the more sophisticated Range Rover. Beginning in 1983 with the long wheelbase 110, the company's engineers set about developing a chassis which could still cope with Grade A glutinous mud, rocks and other landscape — nasties — but not to the total exclusion of comfort. The old and overly aggressive leaf spring arrangement was slung in the Land Rover dustbin, to be replaced by all-round coil springs, heavy duty hydraulic dampers and radius arm location of the solid axles.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDY MORGAN

This was only the beginning. Step two was the standard fitment of Range Rover-style permanent four-wheel-drive incorporating a lockable central diff. and lever-operated two-speed transfer box. Passed on, in time, to the shorter wheelbase 90 model, such improvements worked wonders for the machine's on-road/off-road versatility, a pretty important consideration when looking to continue the viability of the 'British Jeep' in those oh-so-crucial overseas markets.

Another important factor in maintaining the appeal of the workhouse workhorse was the much-needed fitment of new and revitalized power sources. The trick here was to boost performance — particularly low-down lugging power, without sacrificing economy and durability. You have to say they've done a pretty good job. The company began by hiring a troupe of contortionists to squeeze a detuned version of the enduringly successful Range Rover 8 into the engine bay, following this up with substantial mods to the existing four-pot diesel pumper. The real masterstroke has come with the optional installation of a specially engineered turbodiesel unit; this has had the desired effect of increasing off-road urge whilst giving the tank-tough creation the sort of on-road performance erstwhile Landie owners could only dream about.

What is the secret of Solihull's boosted oil-burner? In a word: exclusivity. Put another way, the Land Rover Diesel's turbo unit is a purpose designed power option rather than the sort of DIY accessory which many owners have doubtless turned to in the past as a means of overcoming their machine's on-tarmac lethargy. It's cheaper, too. Bolt-on blowers can cost anything up to a cool 1K or more, whereas the factory fitted option comes in at under £500 and has the company's approval to boot.

The transformation is nothing short of miraculous. Taking the basic 2.5 litre lump, the iron block four-cylinder power plant gets recast pistons plus a specially tuned Garret Air Research T2 turo which boost power by 25 per cent to 85 b.h.p. at 4,000 r.p.m. More importantantly, the crucial torque or 'pulling power' takes a substantial hike to a muscular 150 lb.ft. at a remarkably low 1800 r.p.m. — that's a 28 per cent improvement on the old model and leaves non-turboed rivals like the Mercedes G-Wagen looking rather jaded. Other modifications include heat resistant exhaust valves and a cross-drilled crank, the latter ensuring that the 'shaft' is sufficiently well lubricated under heavy loads. The whole package took two years to develop and the company's engineers have every right to feel pleased with the results.

Other changes have likewise served to reinforce the beast's reputation as the best off-roader in the business, bar none. The worm and roller steering — power assisted in our case — is sharper than it has ever been, imparting a genuine sense of feel on

TEST DRIVE

continued from previous page

LAND ROVER
D446 BDU

the road whilst knocking yards off the turning circle in the car park; this proved a real revelation to a pilot brought up on a diet of army spec. Rovers whose steering columns could be rotated through any number of 360 degree combinations before the front wheels so much as budged. Braking remains the tried and trusted combination of servo-assisted front discs and rear drums — sufficiently beefy to cope with the whirring derver's newfound turbo thuggery — whilst the West Midlands built mud buster sits high and sometimes dry on 16 in. styled steel wheels. Michelin 205 R 16 Xs are the standard rubber ration, though 7.50 XCLs can be specified where the machine is expected to be subject to some real old fashioned off-road assault and battery.

This Land Rover certinly has all the requisite springs'n'things in sensible locations, but what of that instantly identifiable exterior which El Gutto and his scurvy bunch were so intent on disfiguring! Here, the Lode Lane lugger is still the same old tank it's always been. There's the usual assortment of half-round foot-hold bars, both terrifically practical if you need to climb up the side of the machine (you know, safaris, that sort of thing) and a great visual coup if you're into Tonka Toy styling quirks. Lights are the familiar mixture of heavy duty driving lenses and small, round, perfectly-formed lamps, rather like the vandal-proof efforts you find in public conveniences. In keeping with the impoverished traditions of the model, the Land Rover remains the only machine we can think of which can boast a huge piece of RSJ *(Qué? — Ed.)* as a front bumper.

LAND ROVER
D446 BDU

Inside, the increasingly sophisticated Solihullians have endeavoured to tone down some of the more questionable idiosyncracies. Out go those antediluvian door handles, replaced by more conventional push-button jobs. The bonnet release catch has moved inside the vehicle. There's even a good quality stereo radio-cassette, fitted for the first time — conclusive proof that farmers like music too! Overall, the general levels of comfort are an acre away from Landies of yore and despite the peculiar bus-like driving position with its walking stick gearlever/low-slung handbrake, all switchgear falls clearly to hand and instrumentation is clear if bog-basic. Seating is likewise functional rather than flattering to the posture. The front bench allows for cosy threesomes in the cockpit, while the rest of the troops perch in relative comfort in the rear quarters on four pull-down tubular frame creations. Only storage space disappoints, being virtually non-existent in the can and awkwardly arranged and too narrow behind.

Despite space being at a premium, the company have done their best to ensure that what little there is comes well trimmed in the inside and out, the emphasis is on moving Land Rover into the eighties; older models are about as well appointed as a Meccano project car. Adding gloss to the 'Rover, the whole package is topped off by a natty paint scheme dressed up with several packets of Landie sticker and a posy 'Turbo' badge. The rear-mounted spare tyre looks great in its designer cover.

Time to get the show on the road. What could be simpler? Locate the ignition slot, hidden away on the 'wrong side' of the tiller. Insert the key and turn, waiting for the diesel glow plugs to do their stuff. Nothing. Curse, and go through the whole performance again, remembering to leave it longer this time before firing.

Bang! The Great Blue Beast chugs and chunders into life with a cacophony of grunts and gratings culled straight from the soundtrack of 'Tugboat Annie'. Dense smoke belches from the fat, rear-mounted exhaust. The first reaction is embarrassment. How on earth can you expect the neighbours to put up with such a din? What will your favourite bistro patron say when you park the thundering hulk on the pavement outside the recently refurbished premises? Only slowly comes the recognition that the ear-busting row is simply a pointer to the Landie's fearsome off-road capabilities.

Once underway, the thing moves and behaves in a manner which quite belies its box-like bulk. Here, at last, is a Land Rover which doesn't look sick on the motorway. A utilitarian machine which can be rowed along, quite speedily, through a notchy but acceptable five-speed box. Zero to sixty figures, in this context, are a nonsense, but there is more than adequate compensation. In extremis, well-wellied and howling in disapprobation, the boosted oil burner will wind up to a highly respectable 80 m.p.h.+; that's about as brisk as you'd want from a no-frills stump hauler. In fact, it is all a bit unexpected — just note that look of raw terror in the eyes of the XR3 driver as the beast of Solihull thunders up behind him. The ride, too, represents a quantum leap on the old leaf-sprung 'Rovers. Lateral jolts fed through the rigid axles from the surface imperfections which distinguish such British roadbuilding masterworks as the A20 and M25 can still involve the pilot's lungs and intestines in an impromptu juggling act, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Certainly the machine is head and shoulders above the previous incarnation, where every bump and rumple left its cast iron calling card in the driver's spinal column.

Off-road, of course, it's no contest. Move over Yokitoki. Nothing, but nothing can touch the Land Rover for its combination of low ratio pulling power. Crashing rhino-like through the undergrowth, negotiating 20 in. deep fords (yes, it can be done), The 'Rover has no equal: the toughest all-terrain testing becomes a formality. Such was the ease with which the machine coped with everything in the wilds of Essex, we were even persuaded to follow the advice of the irresponsible El Gutto and try the machine out on a few strategically-placed elms. The result? Land Rover: 2, Trees: Nil. Enter one irate farmer. Exit Dudley, bloodied but unbowed. All in the name of science. (The science of proving that El Gutto is criminally insane?)

The big question underlying this unbridled machismo has to be 'Does all this no-frills, no-thrills auto-thuggery really warrant a price tag of £12,783?' After all, if it's just farmermobile robustness and pseudo-military styling you're after, there's always the base petrol SWB Landie at £10,455. That looks just as much a part and is a lot more workhorse-spartan than the relatively (well, all things are relative in this company) luxurious 90 County TD. It depends on your point of view. Many not-very serious off-roaders and paramilitarist poseurs will simply opt for a Suzuki SJ 410 or something similar. Great if your idea of greenlaneing is a picnic on Wimbledom Common. Of course for genuine agriculturists or indeed anyone harbouring even the vaguest ambition to 'play the Squire', a Land Rover is pretty much 'the business'. Such aficionados will claim that the machine is worth its weight in scrap aluminium, rightly so. What's more, compared to the 'joke' £18,825 price of the LR's genuinely comfortable 'Ranger' turbo-diesel running mate, our Landie's £12K tag is bargain basement stuff.

If owning a Land Rover speaks volumes about your bank balance, vitalizing the beast will certainly test the suppleness of your 'flexible friend.' In fact, we're talking double jointed plastic. Our 90 County turbo-tugger huffed and puffed its way to an average fuel return bordering on the low to middle 20s, not bad at all for a machine of this type but certain to take a tumble on the tarmac. Expect about 18 m.p.g. on long M-way thrashes and you shouldn't be disappointed.

As if we care. It has got to be worth the dosh just to see and be seen in such a distinctive piece of machinery. We loved every moment. Full marks to Land Rover for maintaining the back-to-basics go-anywhere appeal of their creation whilst honing and developing its finer qualities. Like sheer muscle power. It's tough and it's fun. You can even call it virile.

Or as that closet greenlaner George Gordon, Lord Byron put it in his highly censorable diary (or at least would have done if his Latin has been better and he hadn't been quite so obsessed with a certain, similar sounding, detail of the female form): "Plenty of grunt and pretty enjoyable."

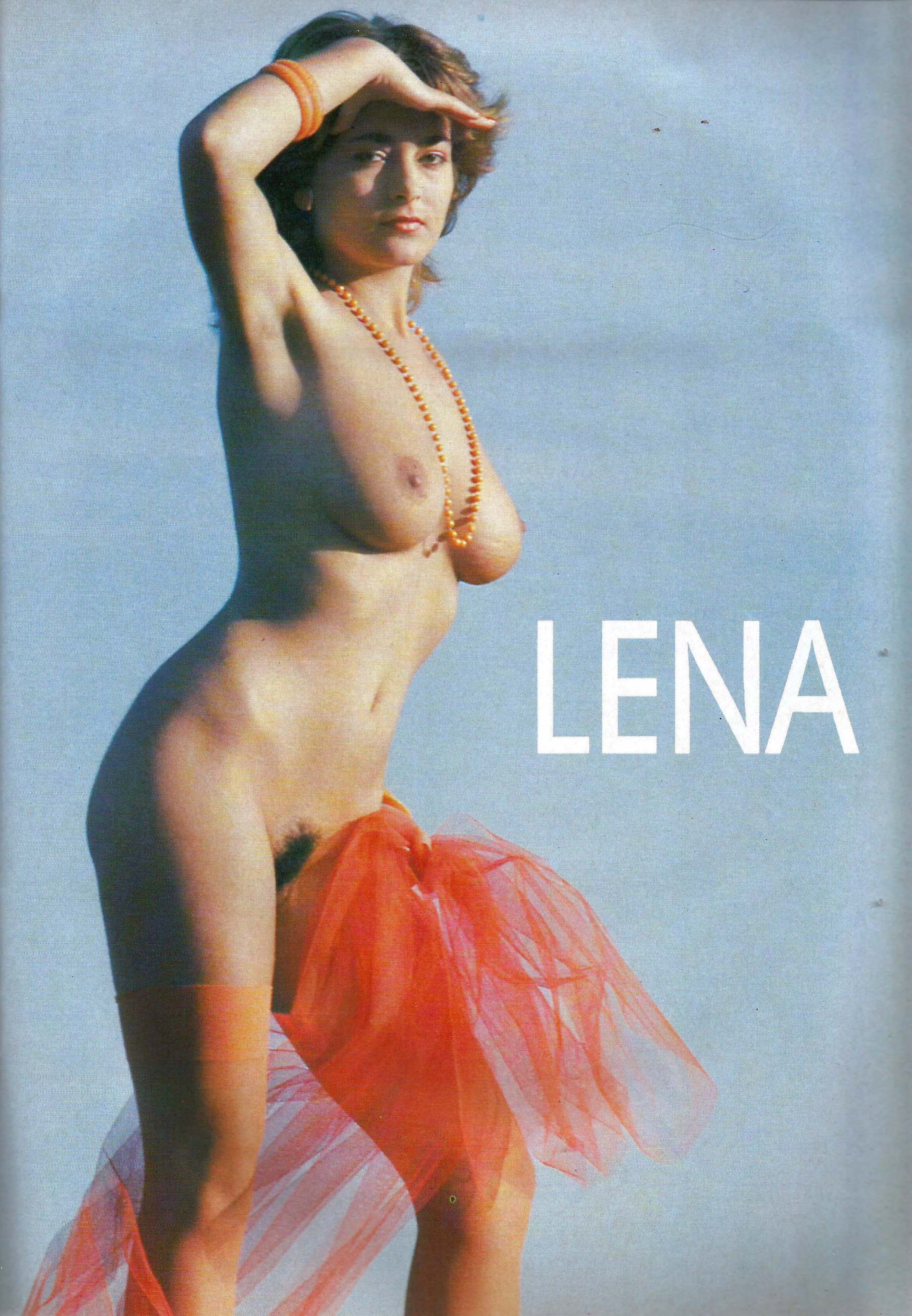
So what did you expect? Culture?

D446
BDU
LAND ROVER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY AUSTIN LEGREW

Lena, we decided, would look pretty svelte on the veldt. So we bundled her off to the African continent with ace lensman and safari-suit owner, Austin Legrew. The brief was simple – capture the elemental rawness of Africa and get some rude stuff on Lena. Here are the results . . . the lad done good as they say in certain quarters.

LENA



THE SECRET LIVES OF LAUREL & HARDY

Behind the screen facade of jollity was a reality of anguish, pain and torment. ALEX KERNAGHAN delves into the backgrounds of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy . . .

Mat
Cat
Rat
2+2=7
3=9

Say "Laurel and Hardy" to any child from seven to seventy and you'll see a gleam in his eye. For Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy are the most loved comics the world has ever seen. Ollie, with his genteel, pompous gallantry and tie-twiddling hokum. And Stan, wriggling his ears or staring with that blank look of baffled incomprehension at a world forever beyond the horizon of his understanding.

They were to become adored by millions and to have their films shown more times and in more countries than any other stars in the history of movies. Ardent fans would include Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Joseph Stalin, Tito, Mussolini and writers like Dylan Thomas and Henry Miller. Yet, behind the on-screen buffoonery of the clowns everyone loved were two very different men: one who studied to be a lawyer and the other who was, quite simply, a genius. If a wayward genius.

For, naive and sexually unmotivated as he appeared on the screen, Stan Laurel was in reality an incorrigible lady-chaser. A fact that was to blight his life and ensure he was never to live with any semblance of permanent financial security.

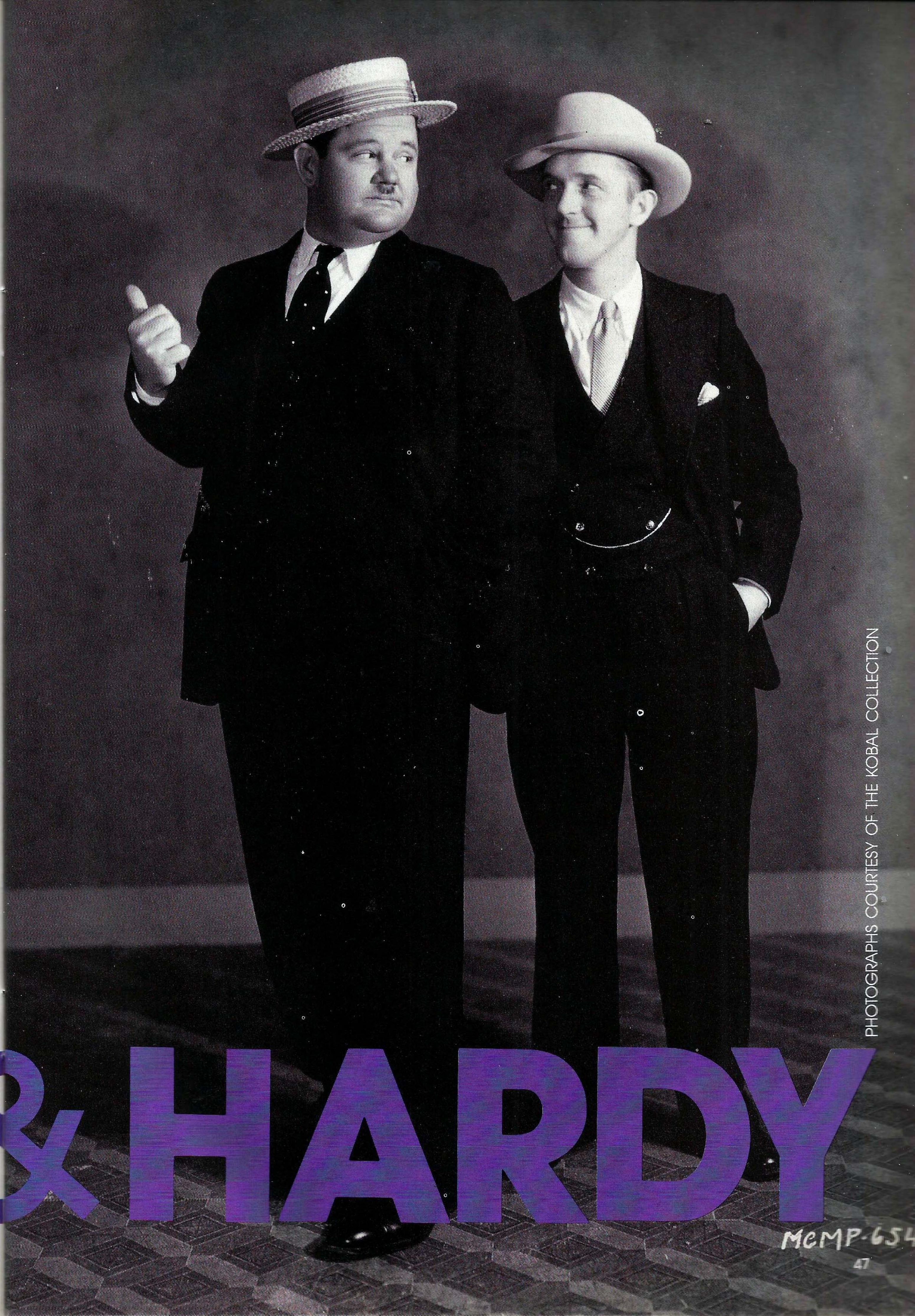
Born Arthur Stanley Jefferson in Ulverston, Lancashire on June 16th 1890, Laurel came from a theatrical family with a love of the boards in his blood. His entrepreneur father owned a theatre and wrote, produced and acted in plays of his own. So it was hardly surprising that young Stan was to be found making his stage debut at the early age of 16. He appeared at "A.E. Pickard's Glasgow Museum" where he achieved a modicum of success with a string of stolen gags and eccentric dances. Thrilled by his minor coup Stan moved on to join up with the famous Fred Karno theatrical troupe. A troupe that then included another bright newcomer to the field — Charlie Chaplin. The two men became friends. Though later, when Chaplin achieved international stardom, he was never to extend a helping hand to his old chum. In 1910 the Karno company took off for America where it toured the Vaudeville halls for three years before disbanding, each performer going his own way. Laurel was by this time a talented pantomimist and continued touring the halls, building up his act and perfecting his routines. It was a lean time. With the superstition common to many theatrical folk Stan decided to change his name from Stan Jefferson to Stan Laurel, the former having added up to 13 letters. There was no immediate improvement.

It was also around this time that Stan encountered the first *femme fatale* of his life, Mae Dahlberg. Mae was an Australian actress in her thirties playing the same theatre as himself. Already married, though separated, she set out to conquer Stan by playing the simpering coquette. Impetuously Stan clambered aboard cloud-nine.

The two began to work up an act together. But, working together and living together, the cracks soon began to show. Mae was in many respects an arrogant and domineering woman, at times not at all opposed to the use of physical violence. Yet that she loved Stan there can be no doubt. For nearly ten years they stuck together, the one abrasive with the other, their quarrels a way of life.

Stan, a man who enjoyed his alcohol, began drinking heavily. In the main, however, he managed to keep the worst excesses of alcohol from interfering with his work. So it was that during one of his stage routines with Mae they were spotted by a producer and asked to make a film; a silent two-reeler. The year was 1917.

The producer was happy and a string of



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE KOBAL COLLECTION

similar films followed. One of them, 'Lucky Dog', included another relative unknown — Oliver Norville Hardy. Like latent comets the two passed barely aware of each other. It was the only movie they would make together until 1926 when they met again to begin their real rise to fame at the Hal Roach studios.

Unlike Laurel, Hardy, born January 18th 1892 in Harlem, Georgia, had no theatrical background. His father, a lawyer, died young, and Oliver and his family moved to Madision where his mother bought and ran a small hotel. It would be with a touch of pride later that he would reveal his direct ancestry to a famous aide-de-camp. The same to whom Admiral Lord Nelson had said, "Kiss me, Hardy".

As singing was something of a family hobby young Oliver took lessons. He was credited with a fine tenor voice, and by the tender age of 8 was performing professionally with a touring minstrel group. He could never have dreamed then that 75 years later (almost 20 years after his death) his voice would take him into the charts on both sides of the Atlantic with 'The Trail of the Lonesome Pine'.

Hardy had always been a plump child with a healthy appetite. Perhaps too healthy. For by the age of 14 he weighed 250 pounds and suffered the ignominy and abuse common to many fat youngsters. It was to remain a sensitive point with him for the rest of his life.

For some time Hardy considered the idea of becoming a lawyer like his father, and eventually took up studies at the University of Georgia. But the sheer monotony proved too much. In 1910 he opened a movie-house, Georgia's first, and for three years he watched the silent flickering images with a mixture of awe and delight. The movies were for him!

He moved to Jacksonville, Florida when he found work almost immediately with the Lubin Motion Picture Co. There he played a variety of roles; straight, clown and heavy, for $5 a day, and when not playing the villain worked at developing comic roles. Those same comic roles that were later to stand him in such good stead.

While in Jacksonville Ollie met Madelyn Saloshin, a cultured singer and pianist who was touring the cinema circuits. She found his 'gentlemanly ways' charming and in 1913 they were married. But the marriage was to be short lived. A couple of years later Hardy moved to New York leaving his wife behind.

For 13 years Hardy would wander in obscurity between Florida, California and New York working with a multitude of film crews or performing cabaret in the clubs. Not until he and Stan were knocking out two-reelers for Leo McCarey, one of Roach's best directors and writers, would the first real glimmer of their potential come through.

"Naive and sexually unmotivated as he appeared on the screen, Stan Laurel was an incorrigible lady-chaser."

It began to dawn on Stan slowly that his mistress Mae was a millstone round his neck. He was at this time working for an independent director Joe Rock, a man not given to sentimentality. Stan was cutting a modest niche for himself in the movie industry and was beginning to receive publicity. It was time his private life was sorted out.

Rock put himself forward as go-between and on Stan's behalf spoke to Mae, offering her $1,000 for a single ticket back to Australia, plus a new wardrobe and $300 cash. To Rock's surprise Mae readily agreed. Like Stan, she was worn out by the continual bickering and narking. Both were glad to be cutting loose.

A short time later, when Mae finally walked aboard ship, Stan turned to Rock and yelled at the top of his lungs; "Yippee! Yippee! I'm free."

Within days he was flirting with a minor player on the lot, a lovely blonde, Lois Neilsen. With Lois Stan became more relaxed and began to ease up on his drinking. To Hal Roach, who had been keeping an eye on Laurel, it seemed a propitious moment to offer a contract. A contract that Laurel happily signed. Life began to look up.

Less than a year after their meeting Stan proposed to Lois and she accepted. He was 36 years old and on the threshold of fame.

The first proper Laurel and Hardy film, 'Putting Pants on Philip' was made in 1927. Leo McCarey and Hal Roach had decided to pair the boys and test the chemistry. Neither had the remotest notion of the incredible success that lay ahead. Within two years the boys would be box-office smashes recognized throughout the world. Yet personal dilemmas dogged them both. Ollie Hardy had since divorced his first wife and was now married to the new love of his life, Myrtle Lee, an attractive brunette. It was to be a policy of Ollie's that should his eye wander during or between marriages then Roach would smooth out the wrinkles, keeping names and scandal from the newspapers.

Unfortunately, Stan could not behave likewise. He believed, quite literarlly, in running his own affairs. Even the birth of a baby girl, Lois Jnr., in 1928 failed to keep him on the straight and narrow. In little more than a year Stan was thoroughly bored with marriage. And, as someone who was adored by children the world over, he found that he preferred them at a distance. Nappies and early-morning feeds were not for Stan.

Searching for something to distract him he lighted on a witty and beautiful French girl, Alyce Ardell. Alyce was comfortably set up and of independent means. She had a wide circle of friends and many admirers in the film world and was totally disinterested in marriage. And she had the most adorable accent. Accents were a thing with Stan.

They held a certain hint of mystery and drew him like a magnet. For the next 10 years Alyce's door would always be open to him, without the threat of marital entanglements.

Accepting that things had soured slightly, and perhaps with some pangs of remorse, Stan decided to take Lois on a second honeymoon. When they returned Lois was once more pregnant. But the baby was later delivered prematurely, and died within 9 days. Laurel went home from the hospital and drank himself stupid.

Before long he was playing the field again. The heavy drinking resumed and there were long moody bouts of silence. This from a man who was at his peak making the world laugh. Lois had had enough.

She saw her attorney and a settlement was arranged. She could have the Beverly Hills home, two $100,000 trusts and support for herself and child. It was 1932 and the boys had just made 'The Music Box'. It won an Academy Award as the best live action short of that year. Yet here was Stan once again virtually penniless.

Early the following year Stan met Virginia Ruth Rogers, a 29 year old widow. Ruth was fair-haired, slim and intelligent and ran a thriving ladies dress shop where she modelled the outfits herself. Her independence and 'classy' looks appealed to Stan enormously. Courtship was begun.

A few months later Stan took Ruth to Mexico where they were married amid much celebration. His drinking eased for a time, but the effort was too much to sustain. On one wild occasion he chased Ruth around the apartment with a carving knife. She was saved by the intervention of a neighbour.

Stan tried to make it up to Ruth with chocolates and flowers, but Ruth too had her limits. There were numerous instances when she flatly refused to allow Stan anywhere near the bedroom. A tactic that understandably made him furious.

"Stan, a man who enjoyed his alcohol, began drinking heavily."

In 1935, as a gesture to Ruth, Stan decided to have a proper church wedding in the hope that they could make some kind of fresh start. But even after the second wedding it all became too much for Ruth. Stan owed $50,000 back tax. He was still drinking heavily and there were those long depressing bouts of sullen silence. When he went off after one of their rows Ruth had the apartment stripped and left. When Stan returned he sat down and wept.

On the Christmas Eve of '36 a divorce agreement was signed to the effect that Ruth was to receive 5 per cent of all Stan's future earnings. She was also given the house, the two cars, some real estate and $17,000. Stan was back to square one.

Hardy too was having his problems. He had been enjoying a long term affair (it stretched over 8 years) with Viola Morse, a lady he likened to the Mona Lisa. He had set Viola, and her child by an earlier marriage, up in an apartment, and the two had rather been living it up. On one occasion they had lost $35,000 at the track in Tijuana. Hardy spent a lot of time at the track, or engaged in his other great passion: golfing at the Lakeside Club. When he did stay at the apartment with Viola he would indulge himself in cooking, and was regarded as something of a gourmet.

In November '37 Myrtle Hardy filed for divorce siting 'extreme mental cruelty' and seeking alimony of $2,500 a week. Ollie left Myrtle, who increasingly found the difficulties of life too much, and ended up a hopeless alcoholic. In December of the same year complications arose for Stan when Mae Dahlberg, now calling herself Mae Laurel, suddenly appeared after a decade of silence. She sued Stan for maintenance claiming, with considerable justification, that they had been 'common law man and wife' for nearly ten years. At the same time Ruth hauled him into court seeking alimony as her 5 per cent had stopped. Stan's lawyer settled with Mae out of court, and Ruth won a temporary payment of $750.

On one of his inevitable visits to clubland Stan met a tall, attractive Russian Countess, Illeana Shuvalova. Illeana was a vivacious blonde who took her socializing seriously. Forever on the party circuit she was, like Stan, an insatiable drinker. While her 'Countess' title was very much in doubt she was madcap, fun-loving and unpredictable — and had the requisite accent. Stan found her irresistible.

"Laurel went home from the hospital and drank himself stupid."

On New Year's Day 1938 they married in Yuma, Arizona. But life with Illeana was to prove anything but idyllic. Forever in search of action she was frequently arrested for drunkenness and was eventually ordered by the court to leave Beverly Hills. Rarely was she off the front page. Increasingly embarrassed by her behaviour Stan dropped going with her to parties. No prude himself, even Stan was appalled at her excesses. In late May 1939 he divorced Illeana, insisting that he just couldn't get her to behave responsibly. There can be no doubt that in the 17 months they were married she had caused Stan's career great damage.

But greater damage lay ahead!

The reign of Stan and Ollie had reached its peak. From here on in everything would be downhill.

It was a time when the studios believed the kind of comedy portrayed by the boys was obsolete. Comedies were more sophisticated now — and there were new Disney cartoons for the children. Even Roach shrugged his shoulders. There just didn't seem to be a slot for the boys any longer. Stan had earned something like a million and a half dollars in his 13 years with Roach and now it was gone — mostly to his ex-wives. Miserable and lonely, Stan approached Ruth about a reconciliation. Swearing-off drink he must have made a contrite figure — and Ruth still loved him. They were married for the third time on 17th January 1941 in Las Vegas.

At about the same time RKO hired the boys to make 'The Flying Deuces'. A cheaply made film, it is notable only in that during the shooting Ollie fell deeply in love with the script girl, Virginia Lucille Jones.

A bit stuffy, Lucille was at first cool to Ollie's advances. But he had "the softest, kindest most expresive eyes I had ever seen and she was won over. Reluctantly Ollie broke off with Viola Morse and he and Lucille bought a ranch in San Fernando Valley. For the first time Ollie began to spend more time at home than at the Country Club.

After the RKO film 20-Century Fox and Metro-Goldwyn Mayer offered the boys work. Unfortunately the studios had their own ideas on what a Laurel and Hardy comedy should look like. The multitude of uncredited contributions Stan had made in the early days; during the writing, in the cutting room or on the set; were totally ignored — to the detriment of the films. The boys hated the whole experience, and Stan would return home disillusioned and unhappy. Ruth's health too was beginning to fail, and things became extremely strained between her and Stan once more. Neither had the energy or the will to keep the marriage together. On 30th April 1946 they were divorced for the last time.

Stan himself was feeling badly run down and it was discovered he had diabetes. Ignoring his doctor's orders to stop drinking he continued his rounds of the clubs. It was on one such binge that he met Ida Kitaeva Raphael.

Another blonde. Another Russian. Another accent. This Russian blonde, however, was of a more sober strain than her predecessor. Busy making a small name for herself in movies she paid little heed to ageing Romeo Stan. Wining and dining her, plying her with red roses, forever professing his love, Stan finally captured her heart. "Please," Ida told reporters after the wedding. "Be sure to quote me right. NO MORE DIVORCES FOR STAN LAUREL."

Everyone laughed.

But she was right.

In the late forties and early fifties Stan and Ollie were unleashed on a whole new generation via the magic of a new medium — television. Audiences that before had been measured in millions now were measured in hundreds of millions. Fan mail swamped the TV stations and for a while it looked as if the boys would get a crack at a TV series of their own. But Stan's health continued to fail. He was 60 now and had a growth on his prostrate that required an operation. He was slow to recover.

Ollie too was suffering ill health. He weighed around 300 pounds and was enduring severe heart palpitations. In 1954 he suffered a heart attack and was ordered to reduce weight drastically. Within a couple of months he lost 150 pounds. No one would have recognized what was left of the big jovial Ollie Hardy everyone had loved for 35 years.

During the Christmas of '55 Ollie experienced a further heart attack with complications. He went into a semi-coma. He couldn't speak and seemed unaware of anything around him. After a year of semi-consciousness Ollie passed away on August 7th 1957. The world's favourite fat man was dead. Stan was shattered.

During this period he himself had suffered a stroke. But gradually he had regained the use of his arms and legs, and it had been his dearest wish that he and Ollie would appear once more on film or TV. Without Ollie he was beaten. During his retirement years Stan was visited by many famous comics, men who readily admitted he was the greatest of them all: Dick van Dyke, Danny Kaye, Marcel Marceau, Jerry Lewis, Red Skelton and Dick Cavett. But his door was open to everyone, famous and ordinary alike. If you wanted to see him you only had to look up his number in the telephone book.

In 1961 he was awarded a special Oscar for 'creative pioneering in the field of cinema comedy.' It pleased him immensely.

Stan spent his remaining years quietly. Ida was his constant companion, and with her by his side he no longer felt the need for alcohol. He spent much of his time watching the sea behind his apartment, or answering the piles of fan-mail that continued to inundate the TV studios.

In mid February 1965 he suffered a heart attack and was rushed to hospital. He lingered for a week, and as he lay on his death-bed he whispered to the attending nurses; "You know I'd much rather be skiing than doing this."

"Oh, I didn't know you skied, Mr Laurel."

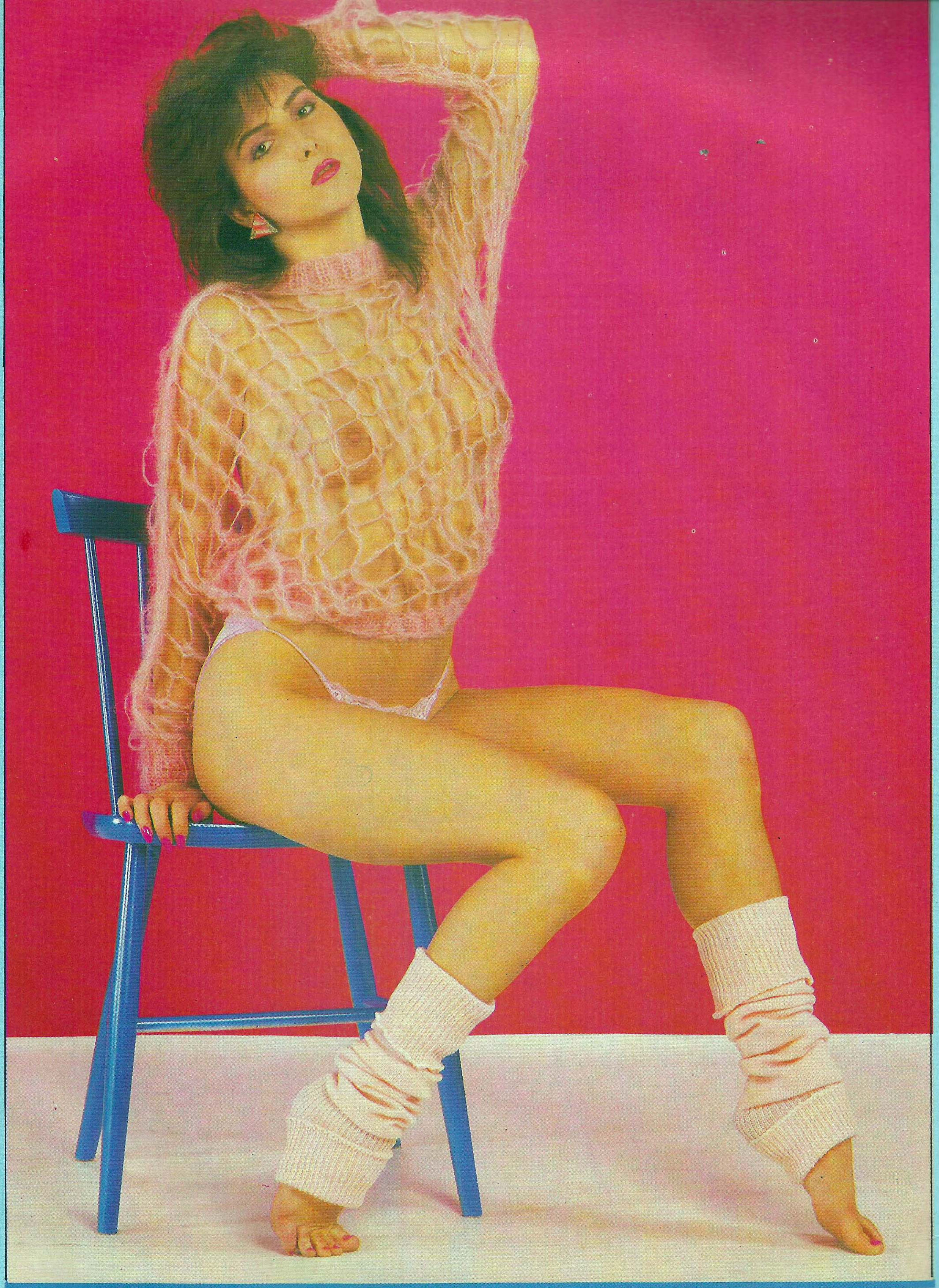
"I don't," sighed Stan. "But I'd much rather be doing that than this." A few moments later he was dead.

Today organizations like the American-wide 'Sons of the Desert' keep their memory alive, settting up a Stan Laurel scholarship and preserving their films for future generations. There have been festivals of their films the world over, new books have been written about them. On telly they've been screened and rescreened — in fact we'll soon be able to watch them in brilliant colour. A Toronto company, Vid Image, is currently utilizing a new computer technique to put colour in the cheeks of the vintage Hal Roach movies. Without ever meaning to, Stan and Ollie have become cult figures.

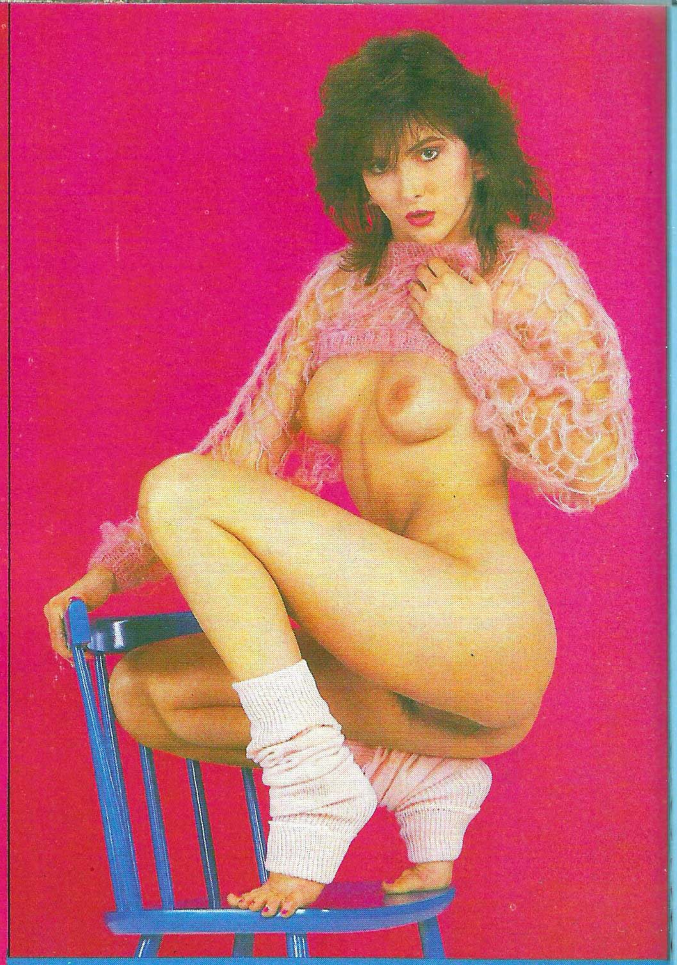
Perhaps it's a sympton of our age that we need the humour and warmth of these two lovable clowns as much today as we did 50 years ago during the depression years of the thirties.

Delivering a eulogy at the Church of Hills in Forest Lawn, California where Stan is buried, Dick Van Dyke said: "Stan and Ollie are both gone now, but I feel the halls of heaven must be ringing with divine laughter." They probably still are . . .

"Perhaps it's a symptom of the age that we need the humour and warmth of these two lovable clowns as much today as we did fifty years ago."



HELLENE



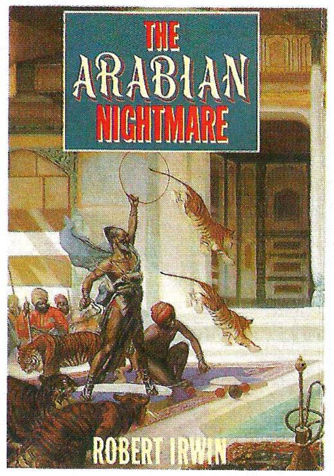
PHOTOGRAPHED BY AUSTIN LEGREW

Hellene's hobbies do not include knitting or crocheting, which is a great shame – that pullover needs mending. The jumper she is struggling to keep on is, literally, something the cat brought in.

On one of his forays he found the pullover and dragged it over to the wardrobe department where it has since come to the attention of our Style Director. This reprobate, in conjunction with the much maligned Artistic Director and his side-kick – the Pretentious Poseur With An Impressively Bound Filofax But No Adequate Job Description, decided that the only thing to do was to paint the studio pink and steal a blue chair from the local tip. This they assured me would produce a mind blowing set . . . they try, bless their little cotton socks.

HELLENE
KNAVE

Book Of The Month



Some months I gaze at the piles of rubbishy books that thud through my letter box and can hardly muster the enthusiasm to pick any of them up, let alone pick a book of the month.

This month is refreshingly different. This month I got a whole heap of excellent books through, many of which, in a normal month, could have been book of the month. Choosing any one of them was almost impossible. But finally I plumped for **The Arabian Nightmare** by Robert Irwin *(Viking, £10.95)*.

This is for three reasons. Firstly, I consider *The Arabian Nights* to be one of the peaks of world literature. Secondly, I love it when an author does something different and wild. Thirdly I'm a sucker for good fantasy and horror.

The Arabian Nightmare is set in fifteenth century Cairo, and tells the story of Balian of Norwich, on a combination spying expedition and pilgrimage to St. Catherine's in the Sinai Desert, and then on to the Holy Land. But once in Cairo Balian finds himself trapped in an endless nightmare: a world in which dreaming and waking become confused, in which truth and fantasy are interchangeable, in which he becomes entrapped in stories within stories.

A seductive harlot teaches him kundalini yoga; Fatima the Deathly stalks the streets, her blade at the ready; the Father of Cats walks the dreams he rules, aided by the Englishman, Vane, and the two monsters, Saatih and Shikk. Here are the leprous Knights of Lazarus, there the Sultan's drunken double; in the Chinese Box is an insect that eats men's minds . . . and how does the Ape fit in to all this?

Yol, the storyteller, tells us this story, a story he walks through, while writing, or compiling, or being told, the stories that will eventually comprise the *Thousand Nights and One Night*. It's a philosophical fantasy, an oneiromantic romance that combines dreams and theology, philosophy and sex, a book at the same time wryly funny and intelligent. Irwin's writing reminds me at times of Robert Nye, at others of Umberto Eco, occasionally of the greatest of living American authors, R.A. Lafferty.

It's a remarkable book, like a lucid dream. I loved it, and I really hope you do. Irwin's second book, *The Limits Of Vision*, already reviewed in these pages, is now out in paperback *(Penguin, £2.95)*. Check it out as well. It's a weird one.

W.C. Gull

Books

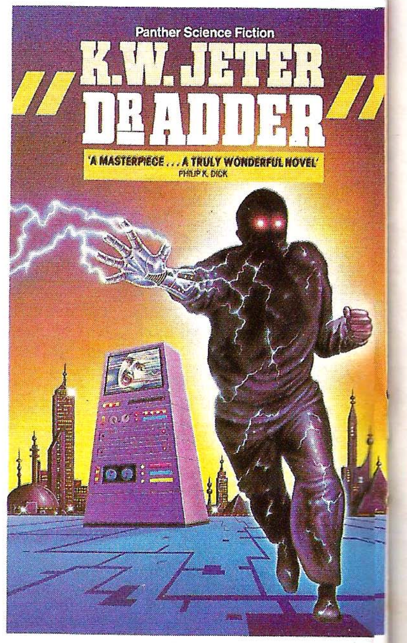
If you write for a living you rapidly discover that there are right ways and wrong ways to write. Obscure grammatical rules you half remember from school (or don't remember, because you were never taught them) can become important in the never ending quest to get your precise meaning across to your reader. Words in this godless day and age tend to be misunderstood, misused and abused. What is the difference between INFLICT and AFFLICT, between FOR EVER and FOREVER? When should one use a comma or a semi colon? And in a world in which English and American are two ever more blurred languages, which nation's forms should we use?

Plain English: A User's Guide by Philip Davies Roberts *(Penguin, £2.95)* lets you know. It's written simply (although never simplistically), and is probably the best book that I have seen for people who talk or write in English and would like to do it right.

I'm a big fan of Stephen King. However, I'm still trying to work out just who **The Eyes Of The Dragon** *(Macdonald, £10.95)* is aimed at. Is it a children's book? An adult book? A fantasy? Horror? Lord alone knows. Certainly his publishers don't.

It's a fairy tale story of handsome and good Prince Peter, imprisoned on the connivances of the wicked court magician, Flagg, falsely accused of the murder of his father, Good King Roland. Young Prince Thomas is now King. But Prince Thomas has a secret . . .

I think it's a kid's book (although some of the more 'adult' material might put some children, or their parents, off). A straightforward story of good versus evil. Or almost. The book has a few moments of high King: Prince Thomas peeking on his father through the eyes of the dragon, for example, or some of Flagg's history. But it lacks the joy and sense of adventure that could have made this King's *The Princess Bride*, and it lacks the simplicity of great children's literature. Having said that *The Eyes Of The Dragon* is a better book than most of the stuff I get to review; but it's not up there with the best of Stephen King.



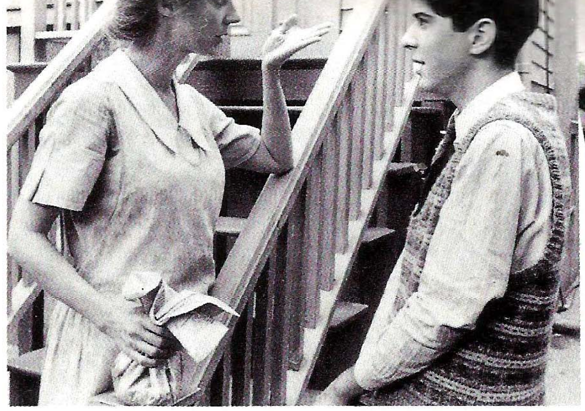
K.W. Jeter's marvellous SF novel **Dr Adder** *(Grafton, £2.95)* came close to being book of the month. It's the story of Limmit, who runs the brothel at a giant chicken ranch. Then he's given a briefcase, and sent to see Dr Adder, the man who really runs Los Angeles, the super-surgeon who amputates, dissects, sculpts in flesh, so the hookers of Interface can give the punters *exactly* what they want. What makes the book work is the strange attitude to sexual perversity: Adder becomes the force that frees the rest of the people to be perverse. He is the pornocrat, whose dryly, slyly humorous attitude to sexual perversion infests the book and infects the world. Where the book fails is in the Candide-like central character (rarely believable), the actual cities (lazily imagined), the twist ending (obvious from the word go), and the fact that, although written in 1972, it didn't get published until the 1980s. If it had been published in 1972 it would have been an underground classic – and well ahead of its time.

Pauline Kael is the film critic of the *New Yorker*. Her latest book of criticism, **Taking It All In** *(Arena, £5.95)* covers the years 1980 to 1983. She has to be the best in the business. Even when you disagree with her (which is pretty often) you can see exactly why she feels the way she does about a film. She's also the only film critic who's as much fun to read whether you've seen the film she's talking about or not. To watch her take apart a film is like watching a surgeon with a scalpel: accurate and wince-making. But what makes her so good is that you realize that she cares enough, and feels enough, to tell you how she feels. You never feel condescended to. Really really highly recommended.

James Herbert's **Sepulchre** would have been Book of the Month most months as well. Why isn't it? Mmm, hard to say: it's a hard, driving novel, with a hero out of Ian Fleming and a Villain straight out of Hell. Liam Halloran is hired to protect Felix Kline, the psychic genius behind the world's biggest mineral corporation. That Kline has dark secrets is not suprising; that Halloran does is more so. My favourite bits of the book were the histories of Kline's 'bodyguards': expanded versions of the vignettes Herbert has always done so well. I think my dissatisfaction is that *Magic Cottage* was so good – a real break from everything Herbert had done before; while *Sepulchre* is a return to the genre Herbert carved out with *The Spear And The Jonah*, what one might call a Dark Thriller. It's not that it's not good (it's the best book of its kind I've read) but Herbert's proved he's an author who can work real magic, and that's what I wanted to see.

The human nose contains the same kind of erectile material as the human erogenous zones. This causes the nostrils to expand during sex play, and during long bouts of sexual contact can lead to a condition known as Honeymoon Nose, because that's when it normally occurs. (Hey, honey, izzat a banana stuffed up your nose or are you just pleased to see me?") I got this from a book called **The Joy Of Touch** by Russ A. Rueger *(Thorson's, £5.99)*. It's a sort of massage book, nowhere near as erotic as the packaging would lead you to believe. Just reading it gave me a backache. Didn't do a thing for my nose . . .

W.C. Gull



Movies

This month we have three essays in nostalgia. Two of them set in '30s New York. **Radio Days** evokes Woody Allen's childhood memories. **Brighton Beach Memoirs** evokes Neil Simon's. They have so much in common I kept expecting all their characters to start visiting each other. Woody, just a soundtrack voice, introduces himself as a kid (played by Seth Green), then recounts some of the adventures and anecdotes that made his mind what it is today. Some great tall tales are told. Have you heard the one about the copulating couple struck by lighting? (It has four possible endings). Then there's the one about the ace baseball player with only one arm, leg, and eye. But reality keeps butting in. Our boy's mother warns his too-picky sister: "If you wait for perfect, you never get pregnant, you'll only end up with your teeth in a jug."

The Neil Simon film is several shades sadder. Here Depression realities aren't drowned out by radio fantasies. Family happiness is on the blink, with dad juggling two jobs and only just surviving heart attacks. As for s-e-x, in those innocent days the kids got by with odd window-glimpses of Moms and Sisses undressing. But at last, "Puberty is over! Onwards and upwards!"

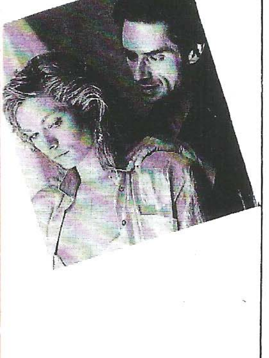
This month crams in six. Count 'em, six murder stories. And none of them a whodunnit. Each and every one tells us who did it, and why. The suspense comes from something else. **Chronicle Of A Death Foretold** starts twenty years after the murder, and the suspense is why so many people foresaw it but did nothing to prevent it. **Dancing In The Dark** plods through dreary feminist self-pity about a houseproud housewife shooting her sneaky husband.

In **The Bedroom Window** Isabelle Huppert glances out from her lover's flat and spots a multiple sex maniac at his ugly game. But as she's very heavily married they can't tell the whole truth to the cops, and get their knickers in some very scary twists. **52 Pick-up** begins with Roy Scheider receiving a videotape of his mistress being kidnapped,

stripped naked, and shot to death. To that rather nasty opening the film tries hard to live up; but, more than its sweaty story, its ritzy hookers kept me watching.

Subtlest of these sex thrillers is ***Black Widow***. Debra Winger lives a dull life, slaving over a hot computer. So she livens it up by stalking Theresa Russell, whom she suspects of nasty post-nuptial methods for disposing of millionaire husbands. I got quite pleasantly hot under the collar as the two sneaky women begin deceiving and seducing each other. Its ending is a bit half-assed but the film sure set me thinking.

Eddie Hartley



It's hard to believe that New World Pictures' ***House II - The Second Story*** (get it?) was made by a professional studio as it must surely be the most technically incompetent movie I've seen this year! Written and directed by newcomer Ethan Wiley (who should shoulder most of the blame), this often incomprehensible follow-up to the 1985 box-office hit *House* has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the first film. Gone are William Katt and George Wendt, and in their place we have Arye Gross and Jonathan Stark (who?) as a couple of friends who move into the archetypal old dark house. Learning that his great-great grandfather, a notorious outlaw of the Old West, was buried with a priceless crystal skull that supposedly possessed magical powers, Gross and his pal decide to dig up the coffin and steal its treasure. However, what they haven't counted on is that 'Gramps' (Royal Dano) is a 175-year-old zombie, still alive and kicking thanks to the power of the skull. Returning home, the unlikely trio are quickly plunged into a series of bizarre timewarps as a wide variety of creatures from other dimensions attempt to possess the skull. John Ratzenberger (Cliff in TV's *Cheers*) has an amusing cameo as a mild-mannered electrician and part-time adventurer who helps to recover the skull from an ancient Aztec temple, but despite some unexpected stop-motion animated monsters and impressive make-up effects, the 'plot' is merely a series of clichéd incidents, strung together by a feeble storyline and uneven visuals. Yet another example of the seemingly never-ending flow of comedy horror films crossing the Atlantic, *House II* must be regarded as a total failure as it is neither funny nor in the least bit scary.

Stephen Jones

Movie Of The Month

Oh, the agonizing difficulty of picking just one movie of the month. Sometimes two scorchers end in a dead heat. Sometimes it's like comparing mutton phal with mint chocolates. This month I'm tempted to *(Watch it. – Ed.)* tease that nice chap our Editor *(You must be joking. – Ed.)* by declaring *two* films of the month *(Sorry, we can't afford it. – Ed.)*. For I'd love to drool ad lib over *Radio Days*, that bit of clever nostalgia by Woody Allen. But after a bout of coin-tossing *(Only coins? – Ed.)* the palm must go to a much more priapic picture *(Good-oh. – Ed.)*: ***Something Wild***.

It's nostalgia too, in its way. The nostalgia of grey people to kick over the traces. Jeff Daniels plays the dedicated tax accountant with one last streak of quirk left in him: just occasionally he sneaks out of restaurants without paying the bill. This lucky time he's pounced upon by arch-kook Melanie Griffith. She's dolled up like every kind of vamp I ever wanted to dream about but am afraid to accost. She sports the flapper hair-style of silent movie princess Louise Brooks, studded leather wristbands, Tutankhamun collar, hippie beads, Nuban jewellery, a gypsy-washerwoman colour-scheme, torpedo thighs, and more personalities than a chameleon. Only a chameleon changes to match its background, she changes to clash with it.

Talk about "Joyce McKinney and the Case of the Manacled Mormon!" Before you can say "Pick-up," the lady has our hapless hero handcuffed and flat on his back in a motel bed while she squats astride preparing to have her wicked way with him. And I mean wicked. Because she dials his boss and over the phone he has to tell a convincing story while the lovely lady is winding her soft sweet self around his ecstatic whatsit.

But this jolly jaunt turns from wet dream into one long nightmare as up pops the lady's old flame, an ex-con whose idea of foreplay is kicking his way through the wall. Actually I was a mite disappointed as this he-male menace crowded the kinky lady out of the picture. And at the corny finale when our man with the spreadsheet mind discovers he has a fighting heart as big as one of Rambo's balls. Still, the films is loaded with fun, thrills and surprises. The clothes alone are a feast of street fashion. If you fancied the feel of *Blue Velvet*, this is more of the right stuff, only in a lighter shade.

Eddie Hartley

Videos

A word of warning in your shell-likes about the two-tape *Warner Home Video* mini-series ***Casanova*** – it's nothing like as rude as you'd think, so don't go hiring it out for a stag night expecting acres of pubic hair. Neither is it to be confused with the BBC television series of the same name starring Frank Finlay. This one also has him in it, but it's an American TV job with the infuriatingly young-looking Richard Chamberlain (he's over 50 for crissakes) in the title role.

These caveats granted, it really is a lot of fun, following the world's most famous lover through countless exploits and girlfriends with a great deal of wit and charm and no small measure of panache. Chamberlain is thoroughly – and surprisingly – suited to the role. Finlay is comically splendid as his long-standing rival and Roy Kinnear is worth a jolly moment or two as a gluttonous monk with whom Casanova breaks out of an inescapable fortress prison. Female interest includes Faye Dunaway and (shurely shome mishtake?) Sylvia Krystel of *Emmanuelle* fame.

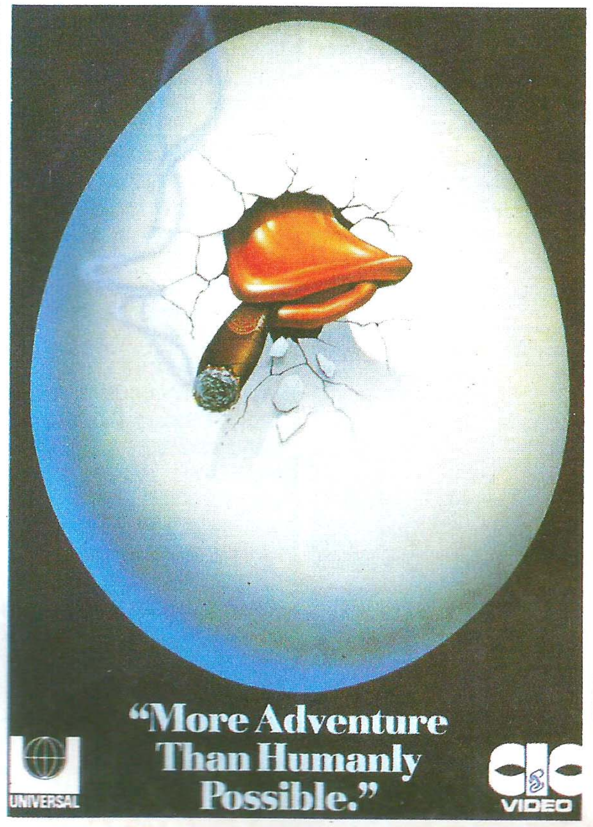
Whilst initially reluctant to view this one, I found it more than amply rewarding as purely lightweight entertainment. One last word to the wise – although a two-cassette title, it runs for less than three hours, so don't even think about paying double the rental of a feature film to watch it. Check your local libraries for prices.

Another reasonable-to-good action title out at present is ***C.A.T. Squad*** *(Braveworld Video)*, which is short of big movie names in the cast but is directed by William Friedkin who shot to prominence with *French Connection* and *The Exorcist*, wandered in the wilderness for a few years and then burst back onto the scene with a vengeance with *To Live And Die In LA*.

C.A.T. Squad is not *Live And Die*, but is engaging nevertheless. In a way, it's an American *Who Dares Wins*, but a trifle more convincing, and follows the exploits of a Counter Assault Tactical group thrown together by one 'Doc' Burkholder for the UK President when terrorists/foreign agents start to systematically bump off members of a team of NATO scientists working on a vital 'Star Wars' project. How up to date can you get?

The film was made for the American TV company NBC and may have been intended either as a pilot or a cable rather than theatrical movie. Fortunately, the only hints of this are in the lack of actual gore in the violent passages – there's no question of it looking like it was designed to accommodate commercial breaks. The cast are fine, the direction nice and pacy and the plot holds water better than many of its kind. A fair evening's viewing.

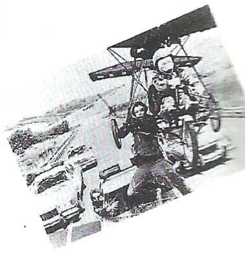
The highly popular Marvel comics character Howard the Duck is essentially quite sophisticated entertainment for young adults; the movie ***Howard . . . A New Breed Of Hero*** *(CIC Video)* is essentially quite unsophisticated entertainment for children – this may go a long way towards explaining why the title proved relatively unsuccessful at the cinema. Actually, equating the box-office takes with the budget – which would probably cover Mexico's national debt – the release was a disaster.


"More Adventure Than Humanly Possible."
UNIVERSAL
CIC VIDEO

If you are a Howard fan then you'll have sat through the film and hated it at the cinema. If the wee drake is unknown to you, you'll feel a lot less outraged at the hero being played by a midget in a feathery costume and looking altogether too cute right down (or rather up) to the quiff coiffage – misoriented Duck's Arse, so to speak.

For those unfamiliar, Howard is a fairly ordinary resident of Duckworld – a planet inhabited by anthropomorphic web-footed types – who is whisked to Earth by a cocked up terrestrial laboratory experiment. He copes with the bewildering world of 'hairless apes' only after he is taken under the wing, as it were, of delectable rock singer Beverly.

Once he realizes what has happened, the head of the lab, Dr Jennings, is keen to help Howard get back to his own planet. But another cock up leads to the scientist's body being invaded by a demonic Dark Overlord of the Universe. Only the duck can save the world . . .



If you suffer from offspring that need keeping quiet, this could prove a good tape to do it with, meanwhile keeping half an eye on it yourself to drool at the romantic interest (Lea Thompson, recently seen in *Back To The Future*) and for the quite superb transformation of Jennings from genial boffin to nasty monster. Otherwise, you'll probably want to give it a miss.

Two dissimilar gross 'n' tacky titles to round the month off. ***The Toxic Avenger*** *(New Media Entertainment)* is a Troma Inc production billed as 'A film packed full of unneccessary Sex and Violence". Unfortunately, it's nowhere near as packed as it was before the censor got his grubby little scissors on it (rumour has it a quarter hour has gone), but it's still pretty sick enough to raise sufficient laughs to make it worth a trip to the library.

Melvyn is the "98 lbs of solid nerd" mopper-up at the Tromaville gymnasium until the wicked clientele set up a practical joke which goes horribly wrong, landing the boy in a tub of radioactive waste and transforming him into the hideously Ugly Toxic Avenger (he looks like

Michael Berryman's deformed twin brother) who sets about cleaning up the town's criminals and corrupt officials. Melvyn's solace in life is that a pretty young (you guessed) blind girl falls in love with him, occasioning all the sick *Young Frankenstein* blind girl jokes and worse. Fun, but not for the squeamish.

Biohazard *(Virgin Video)* is, as far as I can tell, being marketed as a serious horror film. Don't you believe it. If you ever watched those *Worst Of Hollywood* films on TV a couple of years back, you'll understand what I mean when I call this one a candidate for at least a couple of Golden Turkeys.

A mattter transference experiment brings alien objects to Earth. While being transported under military escort, one of them bursts open and unleashes a four-foot-six monster which instantly goes on the rampage. I reckon that to throttle its victims the way it does, it must be standing on a soap box that's out of camera in the best Hollywood/Charles and Di traditions.

SENSE IT. FEEL IT. FEAR IT.
BE VERY AFRAID
BIOHAZARD
18
VHS

Script, acting, plot, direction, special effects and general quality are utterly outrageous. Very definitely one to get out for a boozy Saturday night and sit with your friends ripping the piss out of it. Better still, take out *Breeders* (reviewed a couple of months back) as well, and make it a double bill of the excruciatingly awful. Not to be missed.

Martyn Lester

Although shown to reasonable acclaim at the 1985 London Film Festival, **City Limits** has languished on the shelf for three years unti finally getting a quick release through *Polygram*.

Once again we're back in post-holocaust *West Side Story* territory after a barely-alluded to plague has destroyed most of the world's population. Country boy Lee (John Stockwell) waves farewell to his old mentor (James Earl Jones) and sets out on his trusty motorbike towards the big bad city.

His ambition is to join the legendary 'Clipper' tribe, a group of young survivors who control part of the city along with rival gangs. However, no sooner does Lee arrive, when he becomes involved with the plans of the Sunya Corporation, a sinister militaristic organization controlled by Carver (Robby Benson), set to infiltrate and assume control again – at any price.

Thus the scene is set for a spectacular climactic battle for domination of the city. The flashback framing of the story hints at narrative problems, but in the capable hands of director Aaron Lipstadt (responsible for the cult success *Android*) this low-budget catalogue of comic book action and violence emerges as an entertaining and well made futuristic adventure.

Stephen Jones

Video Of The Month

NEW WORLD VIDEO
They said it couldn't happen in America.
RUTGER HAUER
WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE
18
Hi-Fi
VHS
NWV 1028

If, like me, you're getting just a little pissed off with all the gung ho star-spangled chauvinistic crap in contemporary American action movies, then you'll be unable to resist a small but audible cheer when terrorists incinerate the entire audience at a cinema matinee of *Rambo* in the *New World Video* title **Wanted Dead Or Alive**.

Strangely enough, the storyline resembles in many ways that of one of those very 'long live the land of the free' titles – the Chuck Norris starrer *Invasion USA* – with a freelance gun finding himself the only thing between a bunch of murderous nutters and the innocent American public. Fortunately, what it spares us is any kind of political statement. Sighs of relief all round.

Our hero is Nick Randall (Rutger Hauer from *Ladyhawke, Flesh And Blood* and *The Hitcher*), an ex-CIA killer who has taken up his Wild West Grandfather's profession as bounty hunter, roaming the streets of Los Angeles armed to the teeth and picking up desperados the FBI can't get to grips with.

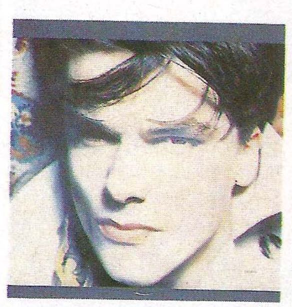
When 'The Company' approaches Randall to take out Arab terrorist and old enemy Malek Al Rahim – who's the guy frying the LA public – he accepts gross sums of money to get the job done. Unfortunately for him it's a CIA set-up, and he's being used as bait to lure his arch opponent out into the open. While Randall escapes the trap, his best friend and best gal don't, and from there on in the one-man blond blitzkrieg takes it all very personally and very violently.

Heavily gory but ultimately highly satisfactory all-action number, strongly recommended to fans of the genre. Watch out, too, for an entirely decent performance from Robert Guillaume (he of *Soap* and *Benson*) as the only CIA good guy, and Gene Simmons of the rock group Kiss as the top terrorist.

Martyn Lester

Records

Guess which female political leader from hearty Lincolnshire grocer's stock could just conceivably, perhaps, lurk as the inspiration (for want of a better word) behind **She Was Only A Grocer's Daughter** *(RCA)* – a white funk opus from The Blow Monkeys.



By the time you read this review there's a good chance that the post-election party (or wake?) promised in 'The Day After You' will have been and gone. Whether the prophesy is just left-wing optimism or not, there's no denying that Dr Robert and Curtis Mayfield sing a pretty mean duet.

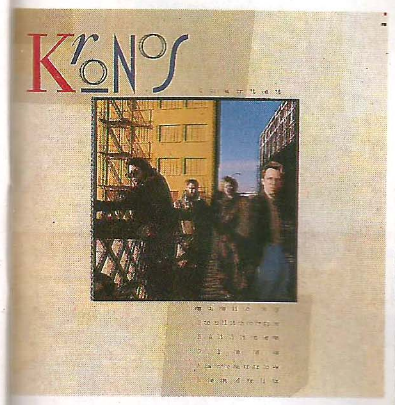
It's an ambitious LP, and for something so dance oriented – not half bad. To talk about intelligent, lyrical soul in the eighties may sound odd – it does to me, I hate the bloody genre – but this enigmatic album is by turns intelligent and lyrical.

The band, in songs like "Cash", manage to deliver endearing little indictments of capitalistic ethics at the same time as capturing the feel of Bowie-soul a la "Young Americans" with a healthy element of Bolan boogie. The seventies feel carries over into "Beautiful Child" – it could have been produced by Tony Visconti.

Production and mixing are almost sensuous. Neville Henry's sax should probably only be available on doctor's prescription. I suspect that it's an aphrodisiac even more potent than Dr Robert's crooning sighs, which in themselves are enough to provoke Paula Yates into asking 'You wanna look at my thighs?' on the eminently listenable "Don't Give It Up". If we had a star rating, this one would rate a lot. Go and get it!

If you come across an album by a string quartet which offers performances of material by Philip Glass and Jimi Hendrix, you've just got to get hold of it, right?

The Kronos Quartet are a San Francisco based string quartet the likes of which you've never heard. Their brief is the twentieth century from Debussy to Hendrix and beyond. The arbitrary boundary between serious and popular music looks like it's in for another battering – praise be. Kronos's **Sculthorpe/Sallinen/Glass / Nancarrow / Hendrix** *(Nonesuch)* is refreshing, an antidote to the celebration of inanity and stupidity that popular music so easily becomes. If you've never heard of Glass let alone Sallinen and Nancarrow, don't let that put you off. Get in there and explore the aural possibilities of violin, viola and cello. You'll be amazed, honest. The next time anyone tells you that 'New Music' is muzak for yuppies, tell 'em to . . .



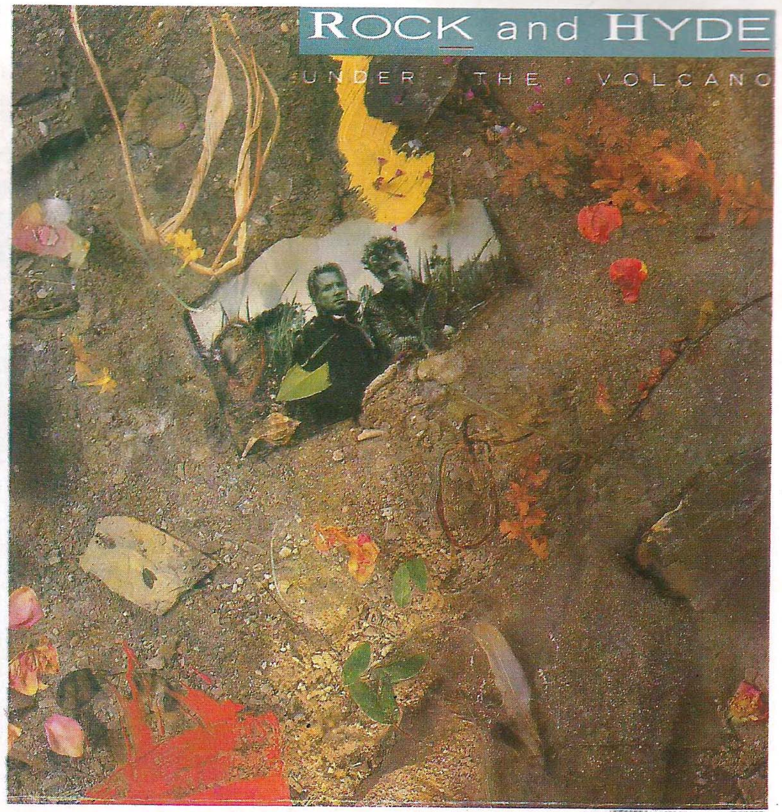
The latest from the Thompson Twins, **Close To The Bone** *(Arista)*, is very competent stuff, occasionally edging into excellence.

THOMPSON TWINS
CLOSE TO THE BONE

"Bush Baby" for instance, where Tom Bailey's vocals and Alannah Currie's percussion merge into a memorably hypnotic piece. The intensely personal "Long Goodbye" speaks volumes with it's direct simplicity. Throughout, there's a stress on the darker side of the psyche: on regret, failure and insecurity, but it's not necessarily depressing – some achievement, huh? At its worst, it's good. At it's best, it's better.

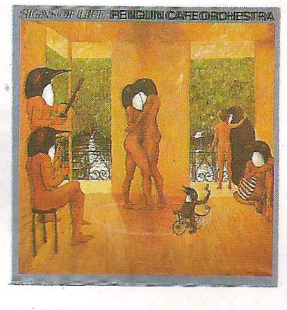
One worth looking for is The Doctor's Children's debut album **King Buffalo** *(Upright)*. Individualistic, lyrically interesting and with catholic musical influences, they may one day be as big as their publicity blurb says they'll be. It's only a mini-album, but there's a lot in it.

Rock and Hyde, a Candian due (sort of – Paul Hyde originally came from Harrogate) have an album out on *EMI* – **Under The Volcano**, which is not as bad as a lot of critics have said. The songs are melodic and grow on you, they invoke memories of early Floyd and soft-edged dream-like reveries. Well produced, well played and well thought out.



For the record, they were once famous (in Canada at any rate) as founder members of a band called The Payolas and were produced for a while by erstwhile glam guitar hero Mick Ronson – platinum records (to match the colour of Ronson's hair in those far off Spiders From Mars days?) rest on their trophy shelves. I hope they repeat their success over here.

On the brilliant *EG* label, I maged to get my grubby fingers on the latest from the Penguin Cafe Orchestra – **Signs Of Life**. Call it quirky, call it idiosyncratic, call it what you like . . . it's delicious. Simon Jeffes musical innovation · continues unabated. Particularly noteworthy are "Horns Of The Bull", "The Snake And The Lotus (The Pond)" and "Wild-life". If you missed them on March's South Bank Show. Get down to your local record store and catch up with them. I can promise you'll wish they released material more often.



Andy Oldfield

Incredible though it may seem to some, country music is now trendy! "Run for the hills!" I hear you scream – but it's true! I'm not talking about the tired old Nashville silk 'n' sequins stars – but a new, young, hungry breed of country musician who are in some ways doing to the Nashville establishment what the punk rockers did to rock music in Britain ten years ago. Nothing quite so loud or violent, of course, but these new kids in town are definitely providing an alternative country music with credibility amongst the record buying public at large.

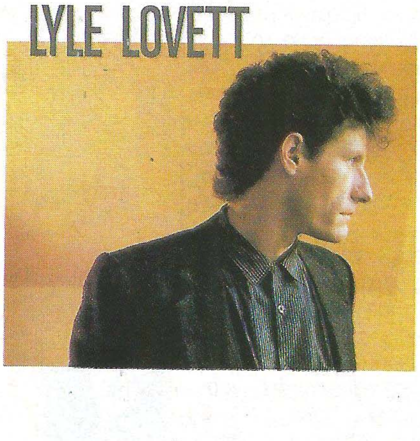
Leader of the pack is one Dwight Yoakam, a lean, handosme Kentucky boy who caused a big stir with his *Guitar's, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc.* album last year. Now we have **Hillbilly Deluxe** *(Reprise)*, which sounds a little more traditional and less immediately impressive at first listen than his previous effort. It's still, however, superior to just about every country LP released this year.

Brantley Kearns on fiddle is the star of the show musically, he provides a perfect

counterfoil for Dwight's nasal drawl. His fiddle sounds as though it's almost crying on '1,000 Miles' – a melancholy classic and my pick of the album. The old Presley song 'Little Sister' has been released as a single, it rocks along jauntily but is not the equal of the Ry Cooder version. Also memorable are the sedate and elegant 'Johnson's Love' and 'This Drinkin' Will Kill Me', a very traditional-style country song which is not as mournful as the title suggests.

So, the impact of 'Hillbilly Deluxe' may not be as dramatic as that of its predecessor, but it maintains Dwight's position at the top of the tree alongside the likes of Steve Earle and Randy Travis, whose new albums will be reviewed soon.

Lyle Lovett is a new contender in the hip country scene. He kicks of his first album **Lyle Lovett** *(MCA)* with a song called 'Cowboy Man' – but he doesn't really sound like your average good old boy c/w crooner. He seems to be the protégé of Guy Clark, a respected country-rock singer, but he doesn't fit easily into any definable category. In 'Cowboy Man' he sings 'Now I ain't never been no cowboy; But heaven knows I try.' Many of the songs are subtle, classy country-tinged numbers, as at times Lyle sounds like a highly strung Jackson Browne; he avoids the clichés but retains the appeal of country music. But on 'You Can't Resist It' he sounds more like Tom Petty, while 'An Acceptable Level of Ecstasy' is a smart-sounding blues number, somewhat at odds with the rest of the album. Last track is 'Closing Time', a splendidly sad but beautiful song that deserves to become a classic. 'These songs are true and timeless,' says Guy Clark. That about sums it up.

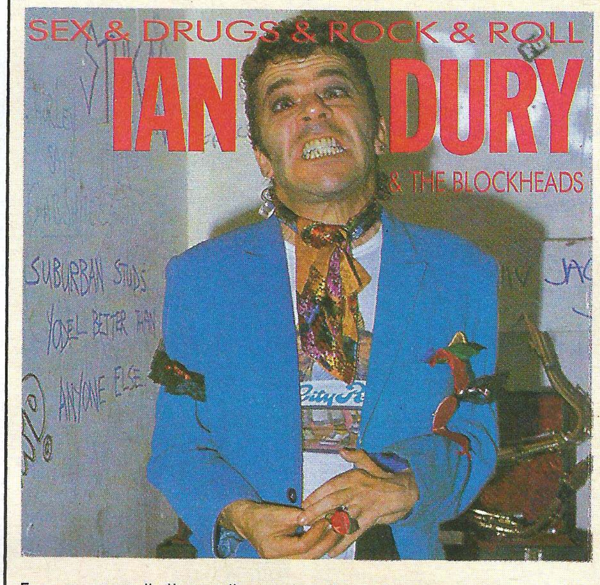


John Hartford has been doing things his way for many years in his distinctively humorous, slightly eccentric way. A fine banjo player who actually has a brand of banjo named after him, John Hartford will never covet the pop appeal of the likes of Dwight Yoakam but will always retain his collection of devoted fans. They shouldn't be disappointed with his new album: **Gum Tree Canoe** *(Sundown)*, which contains some Hartford-style versions of several old classic rural American songs as well as a couple of Hartford's own idiosyncratic compositions and, surprise, surprise, a Jagger/Richards song, 'No Expectations'. To hear J.H. at his best, though, check out 'I'm Still Here', 'Gum Tree Canoe' and 'Wrong Road Again' – if these songs don't make you smile and tap your feet then I'm not sure what will! Of limited appeal, perhaps, but nevertheless this LP deserves some success.

JOHN HARTFORD
GUM TREE CANOE

Rupert Metcalf

Record
Of The Month



For a compilation album to zip into our record of the month spot is pretty extraordinary. But then Ian Dury is a pretty extraordinary bloke. Forget his crooning about being profoundly in love with Pandora at the beginning of the Adrian Mole TV shows. Forget about him appearing in Deus Ex Machina (an interactive computer game) as The Fertilizer 'Wocha cock! I'm a fertilizing agent'. Instead, cast your mind back to the manic energy and wit of vintage Blockhead music.

The compilation, tenderly titled **Sex And Drugs And Rock And Roll** is out on the *Demon* label. It features singles and other goodies from 1977-1980. The roll of honour includes: 'Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick', 'I Want To Be Straight', 'What A Waste!', 'Reasons To Be Cheerful Part 3' and – naturally – 'Sex And Drugs And Rock And Roll.' It's all here, and it's all brilliant.

Against a backdrop of ever changing Blockheads, the man himself exudes wicked charm and wry good fun. Utter corn and musical sophistication are mixed with gay abandon. By turns lascivious, ludicrous and perceptive, the Essex boy never fails to hit the target.

It's rare to find a lyricist who is intelligent, self-mocking *and* who can collaborate with instrumentalists of the calibre of Chaz Jankel so perfectly. Usually, either the lyrics or the music suffer – one predominates to the detriment of the other. But not with Dury. Lyrics and music combine with his vocal delivery, and never fail to please and/or amuse.

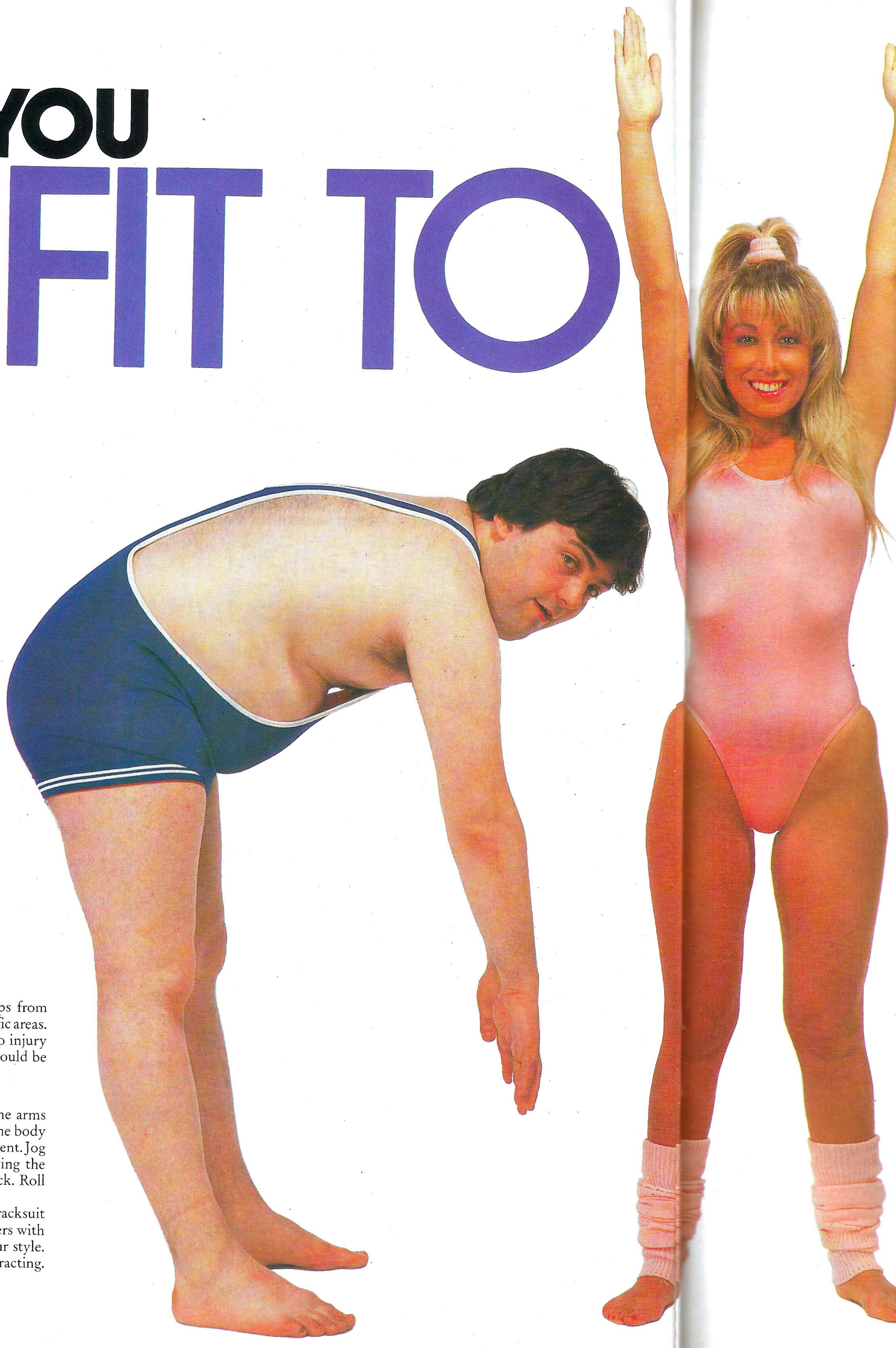
If one piece deserves singling out, it's got to be 'There Ain't Half Some Clever Bastards'. Cornier than an ear of maize, the lyrics include such masterpieces as: 'Einstein can't be classed as witless/He claimed atoms were the littlest/When you do a bit of splittingemness/Frighten everybody shitless.'

The only low point on the album is 'Razzle In My Pocket' – an everyday tale of shoplifting mucky books in Romford. The problem is that the nudie book in question is not Knave, it's not even Fiesta, it's some other rag . . . less scrupulous reviewers would probably say something along the lines of 'not surprised he nicked it, I can't imagine anyone actually *buying* R*z*l*'. But, I'm above that sort of thing!

Andy Oldfield

ARE YOU FIT TO FUCK?

I can't understand it. PUSSY HAMPTON took one look at the Knave office staff and decided to write a feature on getting into trim. So, sweat bands at the ready, tuck those stomachs in and . . .



Bloke on the beach, on the Costa del Sol, doing press-ups. Local ambles by, stops and observes, bemused. Finally he leans over and taps the bloke on the shoulder. "Pardon me, Señor," he says. "The lady . . . she is gone." Okay, so you've heard it, and it's not very funny.

But what's so amusing about a beer gut, a droppy bum and a floppy sex life? And one assumes, given the press-ups, that these are the things which the aforementioned bloke was trying to avoid.

For, loath as you may be to admit, a precedent has been set. Not long ago another bloke dropped his trousers in a launderette for a television commercial and suddenly body image matters.

If your attitude is 'what you see is what you get' and what she sees is a cross between Giant Haystacks and the Loch Ness Monster, then what you're likely to get is — zilch.

Let's have a practical demonstration.

Drop your trousers. Go on — drop 'em — don't be shy (nb. I am assuming you are reading this at home — or at the launderette).

Now look in the nearest mirror. What do you see? Is every muscle taut? Can you, perhaps, pinch an inch? Or — horrors — has your chest mysteriously descended to waist level so that now you go out where you ought to go in?

You don't have to look like Mr Universe (heaven forbid) but if what is staring back at you is more like 'the thing from outer space', then it's time you took yourself in hand (you've got your trousers off anyway) and got down to some serious sexercising.

You may believe that the love of your life desires you for yourself alone, is drawn to your individuality, your prowess at shove-ha'penny down the local, your endearing habit of reciting 'Desperate Dan McGrew' every time you're invited over to her mother's; but the sad fact is that women have become more aware of the condition of their own bodies lately, and that awareness has made them more conscious of the condition of yours. And comparisons, as they say, can be odious.

Unless you make love with the lights off — you don't, do you? — then the contrast between her well-toned frame and your collapsing same could prove to be the death of desire.

We all know that beauty is only skin deep but, be honest, if you had your choice of two women, both of whom could turn out a superlative steak and kidney pie and one looked like Sam Fox while the other resembled Sam Speigel, which one would you go for? Exactly.

The good news is that whatever state you're in, the damage is repairable . . . with a little help from your friends.

You don't have to rush off to the nearest gym and start making like Arnold Schwartznegger (Please *don't.* In your condition you'll do yourself a desperate damage).

What you need is a few simple sexercises. And the determination to perform them regularly. Because, as with sex, once a week is hardly enough to make an impression.

The trick is to keep it up (isn't it always?) and to that end I suggest you don't make sexercising a solitary vice but indulge in it with the partner of your choice.

Choose a warm, well-ventilated room, slap something groovy on the tape-deck, move back the furniture and get on with it.

When you've finished, we'll start the exercise session.

I've divided it up into seven sets.

Warm-up. Press-up. Open-up. Curl-up. Tone-up. Loosen-up and Give-up.

1. WARM–UP

OBJECT.

To heat the major muscle groups from within, before getting down to specific areas. Working on a cold body can lead to injury (like a smack round the ear) and should be avoided at all costs.

METHOD.

Begin by alternately stretching the arms up towards the ceiling and curling the body down towards the floor with knees bent. Jog on the spot for a few minutes. Swing the arms in big circles, forward and back. Roll you head, gently, from side to side.

NB Wear loose clothing — like a tracksuit or boxer shorts and a T-Shirt. Trousers with tight waistbands will just cramp your style. Pyjamas are good but could be distracting. Just whatever turns you on.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES FREEMAN

2. PRESS-UP

OBJECT

To strengthen the upper arms (all the better to hug you with, my dear,) tone the pectorals (chest muscles) and make sure you don't have to wear the same bra size as she does.

METHOD

Lie flat on the floor, face down, arms bent at the elbows, fingers facing forwards.

Press down with the palms of the hands and raise the upper body off the floor until your arms are straight. Don't hold your breath. Don't grit your teeth. It'll soon be over. Trust me!

Lower your body again until it's about an inch off the ground. This is your resting position. Don't flop all the way down.

Repeat this movement five times (come on — even *you* can do five), working up to 25. (Add one press-up more every day).

NB Don't bend in the middle as you push up. Keep the back flat, the stomach pulled in and the bottom tucked under.

3. OPEN–UP

OBJECT

To tighten up the inside thighs. Why? Strong inside thighs will help you 'grip' better. These are the muscles used to best advantage in horse-riding. Need I say more?

METHOD

Lie flat on your back. Arms by your sides. Shoulders relaxed. Pull your knees into your chest and then stretch your legs straight up in the air. Bring your heels together. Flex your toes and turn them out to the side.

Drop your legs outward towards the floor. If your inside thighs are tight you may find that, like the reluctant virgin, they won't go very far. Don't worry. Again, like her, they will loosen up in time. When they've gone as far as they can go, bring them back together again (not so easy).

Repeat for two counts of eight, keeping your back flat at all times.

Finally bring toes together and heels apart and repeat the movement for two more counts of eight.

NB As a bonus this will help firm the flab on a less than flat stomach but for a real gut-reducer, try the next beauty.

4. CURL–UP

OBJECT

To ensure that the only spare tyre you possess is in the boot of your car.

METHOD

Lie flat. Arms by you sides. Knees up to the ceiling. Feet flat on the floor. Knees and feet hip-width apart.

Raise the head and shoulders off the floor and curl up slowly, running your hands up your thighs (*your* thighs, I said, not *hers*) until you reach your knees. Hold for a count of four, then RELAX back. Repeat eight times, working up to twenty.

5. TONE—UP

OBJECT

To supple you up. This yoga based stretch is called 'The Cat'. Good preparation for a night on the tiles.

METHODS

1. Get up on your hands and knees. Come on — we're almost finished! Keep your back flat. Stomach in tight. Head placed so that the vertebrae in the back and the vertebrae in the neck make a long, straight line, parallel to the floor.

2. Arch your back up towards the ceiling. Drop your head between your arms and push your pelvis forward to increase the stretch. Hold for a slow count of four.

3. Allow your back to drop down into its original position. But don't leave it there. Instead curve it downwards towards the floor (don't let your stomach sag). Raise your head and push it back towards your rear end. Hold for a low count of four.

4. Repeat the whole sequence two or three times.

NB When you begin to stretch, you may be horrified to discover just how stiff you are (on the other hand you may not). However, if you practise stretching regularly you will be amazed how soon you can tackle page 62 of the Kama Sutra.

And next, the moment you've all been waiting for.

6. LOOSEN-UP

OBJECT

A backside 'like a bagful of hammers' will not endear you to your nearest and dearest. This sexercise will prevent your behind from banging against the backs of your knees when you walk.

METHOD

Start in the same position as for the previous sexercise. Push down with your lower arms and raise your back off the floor, taking the weight on your shoulders. Don't arch at the waist. Ideally you should make a long, straight line from shoulder to knee (privates permitting).

Imagine you have a walnut clutched between the cheeks of your bottom and you are trying hard to crack it.

S-q-u-e-e-z-e . . . and then Relax.

Repeat for a count of twenty. That's all - (except remind me never to eat walnuts at your house).

7. GIVE-UP

OBJECT

To unwind gradually.

Again, as with sex, it is counter-productive, not to say bad-mannered, to leap up and rush off the minute you've finished.

Take time to unwind.

METHOD

Put on your smoochiest record.

Lie back, close your eyes and let it all hang out for five minutes.

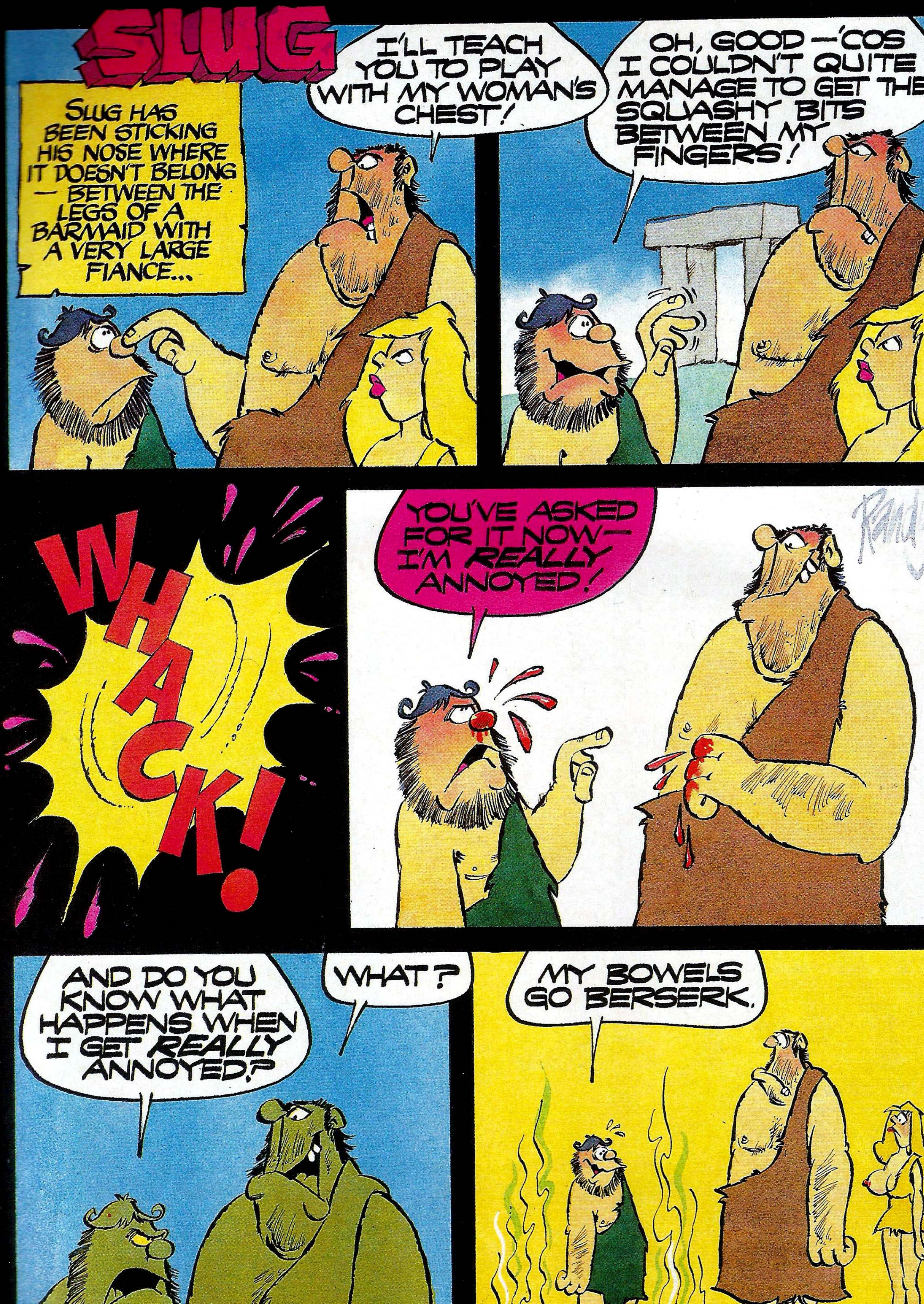
Why not invite your partner to join you (especially if you feel you're coming apart). One thing leads to the oth ... sorry ...another... and since you're down there anyway...

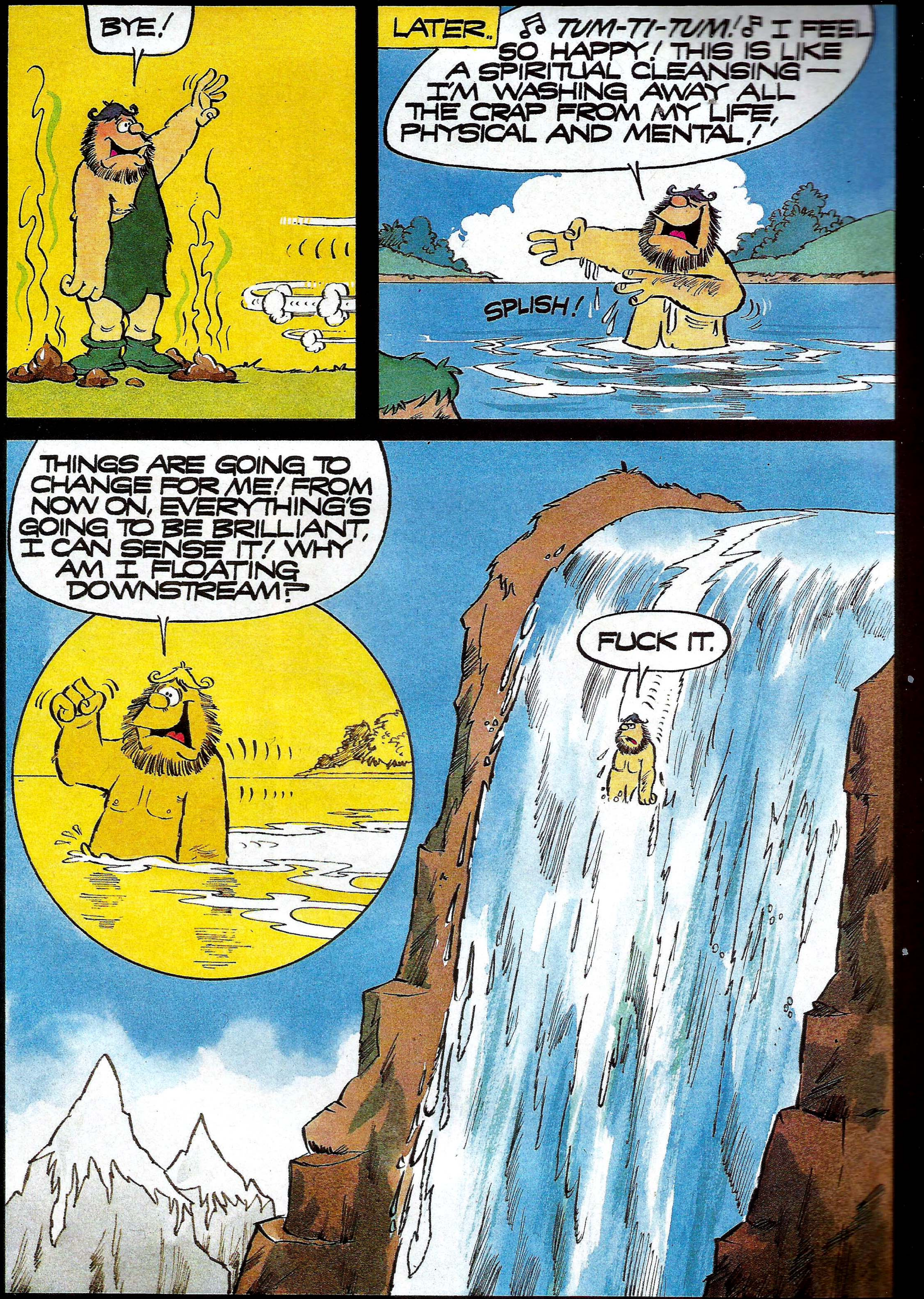
POLLY

Polly may or may not be a paragon of physicality. I don't know — some bastard's stolen that page out of my dictionary. Without a shadow of a doubt, she's pretty fit. Her sprinting ability is legendary. On one memorable occasion she challenged our esteemed Editor to a foot duel. She was in the lounge bar knocking back her seventh egg-flip before the Editor had managed to straighten his back after an abortive attempt at a sprint-start.

When not drinking or being athletic. Polly likes nothing better than to laze around on hot beaches listening to the Pacific Ocean breaking onto Californian beaches.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIMON HURST


SLUG
SLUG HAS BEEN STICKING HIS NOSE WHERE IT DOESN'T BELONG — BETWEEN THE LEGS OF A BARMAID WITH A VERY LARGE FIANCE...
I'LL TEACH YOU TO PLAY WITH MY WOMAN'S CHEST!
OH, GOOD — 'COS I COULDN'T QUITE MANAGE TO GET THE SQUASHY BITS BETWEEN MY FINGERS!
WHACK!
YOU'VE ASKED FOR IT NOW — I'M *REALLY* ANNOYED!
AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GET *REALLY* ANNOYED?
WHAT?
MY BOWELS GO BERSERK.


BYE!
LATER..
♫ *TUM-TI-TUM!* ♫ I FEEL SO HAPPY! THIS IS LIKE A SPIRITUAL CLEANSING — I'M WASHING AWAY ALL THE CRAP FROM MY LIFE, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL!
SPLISH!
THINGS ARE GOING TO CHANGE FOR ME! FROM NOW ON, EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE BRILLIANT, I CAN SENSE IT! WHY AM I FLOATING DOWNSTREAM?
FUCK IT.
NEXT MONTH:- SPLAT!

AMATEUR MODEL

A lot of girls do it — how about you? If you want to become one of our Amateur Models, fill in the form at the end of this feature and send us some rude photos of yourself. Polaroids will do, at least two completely nude — front and back view.

If you live in Leeds, your luck could be in. Susan here works in a city centre pub as a pint puller. Looks like a drinking tour is in order, eh?

Susan Lomas

Susan originally came from neighbouring Lancashire where she indulged her passion for fellwalking and rambling. Since crossing the border into Yorkshire she's kept up those interests and diversified with a spot of pony-trekking. Like many of our Amateur models, nineteen year old Susan quite fancies a career as a model. Sounds like a very good idea to me . . .

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES FREEMAN

TO: KNAVE AMATEUR MODEL FEATURE, P.O. BOX 312, WITHAM, ESSEX CM8 3SZ.

WANTED — A star for a day! GIRLS — do you think you could be Amateur Model of the Month in Knave? GUYS — do you know a girl who would like to model for Knave? Yes? If so, send us some colour prints or polaroids — preferably fully nude — plus the completed form. We choose the girls we like, and invite them to our Studio in Essex for an enjoyable day out modelling for Knave, with a professional photographer behind the camera and a make-up stylist to make our girls look their best. We pay each Amateur Model £200 for their modelling session — and £25 goes to the photographer who sends us their pictures. Girls are eligible for our Amateur Model feature as long as they have not previously appeared in Knave, Fiesta or any other mens' magazine.

MODEL'S NAME ....
ADDRESS ....
....
DAYTIME TEL. NO. ....
DATE OF BIRTH ....
SIGNATURE ....

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NAME ....
ADDRESS ....
....
DAYTIME TEL. NO. ....
DATE PHOTOS TAKEN ....
SIGNATURE ....

continued from page 91

tapped me on the shoulder a second later.

'Take these towels to room 445,' he said, 'and remember to knock, girl.'

'Yes sir,' I answered. I took the towels from his hand, and off I went.

I don't know why but every time I enter the employee's elevator, I always feel a little randy, and my juices start dripping down my legs, I guess it must be the memory of what happened that day, so that by the time I got to room 445 my pants were quite drenched. The door was open, but I gave it a good knock anyway.

'Come in!' someone (a male) yelled.

So I walked in. I was a bit afraid that he would smell my juices that had now dampened my legs, but anyway.

'Put them over there, on that little stool, will you.' He was a rather big man, with a bit of a tan.

'Yes, Sir.' I walked across the room, right by him and bent over to fold the towels under the stool. Suddenly, I felt his hand on my bum as he began to stroke it. I let out a gasp of mixed pleasure and excitement, and stood there for a few seconds, and then I turned around and told him:

'Now, now Sir, I must be on my way now, but if . . .' I was stopped short. He had disposed of his trousers and pants, and there before me stood the prick I had dreamed about for so long. My legs seemed to open themselves magically. 'Oh, how I need a man,' I said, totally overcome. I needed a man so badly, there was no way I was going to leave that room without being properly fucked.

My hand reached down to fondle his member, but he grabbed my arm and then threw me on the bed.

'Take your shirt, off honey, and undo your skirt,' he said, while he stripped off his shirt.

I did not take off my blouse, I tore it off. I was lying on the bed with my tits showing, (I don't wear a bra), and my naked belly twisting with anticipation, when he came over and kneeled before me, his dick standing upright.

'Lick me all over honey, come on,' and he came closer. I knelt in front of him and began kissing him around the mouth and then his mouth opened and he swallowed my tongue. My tongue played with his for a while, while my hand fastened itself around his knob. He then got hold of my head and guided it down between his legs. I began kissing the tip of his magic muscle, whilst fondling his balls with my hand. He pushed his dick between my lips, and it entered my mouth. I sucked hard at it, running my tongue up and down the length of his penis. I bit it every now and then ever so smoothly, trying to get at the semen inside. He began pumping it in and out of my mouth, faster and faster, till I knew he was close to orgasm. I tried to withdraw, but he held me close with his strong hands, and suddenly, he came inside me.

'Oh, take it honey, take it,' he cried, twitching all over.

In a few minutes I had him going again and this time I got licked all over. His tongue ran over my tits, while his hand felt my wet pussy. I dropped him down on the bed and sat on his face, his tongue entered my box and I let out a sharp gasp. He bit my pussy lips, while I fondled my breasts. Then I realized there was someone else in the room, and I looked up to see his wife, wanking herself off in front of us. She then came forward, knelt on top of his waist, and guided his dick into her. She began humping him. She bent right back as she approached orgasm, and she twisted and turned in a frenzy and fell off the bed. I came next. My juices running into his mouth, I bent forward and took his dick into my mouth again as I had my orgasm, my pussy lips trying to swallow his face.

I then lay on the bed with my legs wide open, he tickled my wet lips with his dick for a while and then he entered me. My legs curled around his back, as he started humping me. My legs tightened around him, and I yelled out in ecstasy as he came inside me.

I was totally spent. I went home at about 7.30pm, and had a shower. I then made the bed (fully naked) and was about to put on my night gear when Terry (my husband) walked in, naked, with a massive erection and carrying a Knave porno mag. We fucked all night long, I don't know how I lasted but I did, he did everything. Thank you Knave for arousing my husband to such a breathtaking degree. I felt I had to pay you back in some way, so I told you all about it, it might be too long to print but your readers would love it. I hope you can print it, it would be such an honour. – *Sarah, Devon.*

"I hadn't realized just how tight those jeans were, or what a big bum she had. It was in direct proportion to her tits."

Whining Drivel

I used to be a regular reader of other mags. But I thought I'd try yours for a change. I don't think it was a good move.

Your photos aren't as clear as most of your competitors. Your colours seem much duller. Most of the girls are okay, though. There are some exceptions. I enclose copies of two fucking ugly fat tarts with Caesarean scars. What a heap of steaming rat's shit. What's going on you lot?

Keep your wits about you. I'm trying to decide whether to subscribe to Knave or some other magazine. The decision is yours in many ways – give us value for money. – *Rob, Northants.*

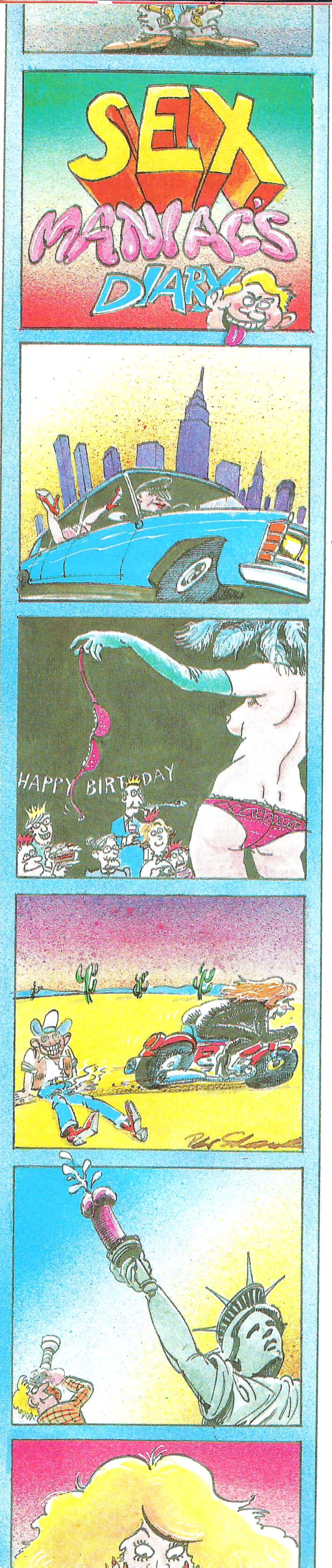
Aren't we wonderful human beings – printing all this vicious abuse? Freedom of speech is a principle worth defending, even in the case of plebs who probably shouldn't have been given the vote in the first place. – Ed.

GREENPEACE
Wing

KAMA

Kama is an old friend from way back. She's changed her nationality since she last appeared in Knave. She's now a citizen of Ecuador — which goes a long way to explaining the colour scheme in this set of photos. Ecuador's flag is, as you all know, a three banded colour affair: reddish, yellowish, and light bluish. Our artistic director thought that this could be incorporated into the girlie pictures as a conceptual link operating on the subliminal level. In practice it meant a yellow bed-set and windows, red flowers and turquoise suspenders . . . so much for art. I suggest you concentrate on Kama instead.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAG OHRLUND



It just had to happen. TUPPY OWENS is snowed under by all sorts of unwholesomeness this month. RICHARD CURTIS fills in with tales of condom testing and other low life goodies!

Years ago, I remember furtively rooting around in my father's bureaux, hoping to discover air-rifle pellets, cigarettes or other such forbidden fruits. What should I turn up, but a copy of Tuppy Owens' 'Ins and Outs of Oral Sex'? Little did I know that ten years later, I would be holed up in a Mayfair basement flat, writing for the self-same Ms. Owens on her notorious *Sex Maniac's Diary*.

I couldn't believe my luck when the job came up. I mean, getting paid for inventing fantasy games hardly sounded like my idea of a hard time. On top of this, working beneath Tuppy (in a purely hierarchical sense, of course) sounded as if it could be pretty amusing.

The first thing that struck me about the SMD office, after I'd negotiated the labyrinthian maze of corridors, was the weird smell — a peculiar combination of rubber and old candles. It soon became apparent that the sources of this olfactory cocktail were pinned, taped, stuck and stapled on every available surface in the office . . . condoms: hundreds of them, arranged in order of taste, durability, safety and star quality. Even the chandelier in Tuppy's office was bedecked with the bloody things; dangling like withered udders and oozing nonoxynol 9 like some kind of bizarre orchid in nectar overdrive.

Walking back to the tube, there's a trail of them, leading like a pervert's paperchase to Tuppy's apartment door, where they've been carried on the unsuspecting soles of visitor's shoes, fallen from pockets and generally been spread around Mayfair like latex manna from a benign safer-sex deity on a PR exercise.

The reason for all this is the rubber road test for the 1988 Safer Sex Diary — an AIDS aware update of the 1987 version. Each member of Tuppy's staff has been allocated a batch and given them a thorough workout — you'll have to wait until August for the results, though!

Tuppy and illustrator, Melinda Gebbie.

Talking of Tuppy's staff, it's hardly what you'd consider to be your average bunch of office drones. We've got a genuine Sigue Sigue Sputnik ultra-vixen on brothel hotline phone calls, checking out the sin-bins of the world for service, facilities and good time potential. A budding

continued from previous page

rock star on paste-up, his waist length platinum blond hair dangling in the cow gum. A crazy American illustrator, permanently plugged into her Walkman, dancing round her drawing board. A dedicated denizen of London's clubland, who never appears to sleep, tapping away on the word processor in a permanent post-coital coma. And of course, Tuppy herself — cruising through the chaos with a serenity born of years of experience in dealing with teams of overworked, sleep deprived, frazzled tequila casualties. Occasionally though, even she despairs — "Sometimes I think this place is staffed by morons," was recently overheard at the end of a particularly disastrous, disorganized and unproductive evening's fucking around. She's not far from the truth, judging by this week's performance.

Here's a woman who really nose about condom testing and other crazy stuff like that.

Friday, the place resembled a cross between a zoo and a crèche — it was Tina the cleaner's kid's birthday and she'd been given a puppy which she insisted on calling 'Coke' and shouting this at the top of her voice to the chagrin of the 'tired and emotional' staff. The little bastard proceeded to happily gambol through the filing cabinet, leaving half-chewed S/M club brochures strewn around the lobby. As it's *pièce de résistance*, it pissed all over the world atlas, unknowingly creating a new land mass — the incontinent continent (sorry).

Now, we could have coped with all this, *and* the phones packing in, if it hadn't been for the arrival of two fun-seeking swingers, intent on dragging the entire staff out to a fetish evening at the Maitresse Club, and using our offices as changing rooms in which to squeeze into their various rubber bondage attire. Baby powder snowstorms and the slap and snap of rubber on cellulite is hardly the most conducive atmosphere in which to conduct the rather serious business of condom lubricant tasting. Everyone, but Tuppy (she's too kind hearted), declined the swinger's invitation and slipped off to their respective late night watering holes. Apparently, the club owner, on recognizing Tuppy, started gushing apologies for the dirt on the floor, which was rather peculiar, considering the wall-splattering antics of certain guests . . . dead funny, some people.

> **"Unfortunately, our combined artistic talents don't amount to much. Our illustrations, as well as being absolutely, totally and utterly unintelligible bore only the vaguest resemblance to the acts they were supposed to depict . . ."**

Come Saturday, everyone nursing hangovers, or at least mildly suffering from the previous night's excesses, we had to cope with a crazy Japanese pornographer, who not being able to speak a word of English, negotiated a rather peculiar 'fruit for condoms' deal, wherein Tuppy was obliged to provide a large bowl of exotic fruit in exchange for a variety of unusual rubbers from the land of the rising sun. The female members of staff, in an uncharacteristic display of Euro/ Japanese cultural bridge-building, appeared rather appropriately in Japanese warrior headscarves, to the confusion of our long suffering porter, who assumed that some kind of sequel to Pearl Harbour was about to happen in the basement. Having disposed of the snap-happy Mr Tainaka (who left cackling with glee, photographing the girls in the head scarves and the erotic teapot) we thought we could get back to writing and researching the Safer Sex section of the Diary — some hope.

A Melinda Gebbie official photograph of the day's work.

After ten minutes of virtually uninterrupted jotting and frotting, enter a Sunday Times reporter to interrogate Tuppy on Safer Sex practices. This would have been okay apart from the simultaneous arrival of a rather bubbly young lady, fresh from fucking her way around the globe. She insisted on sitting in the same room and dialling old flames in South America. God only knows what the *Sunday Times* is going to make of this place.

Attention to detail is something taken to extreme measures here at the SMD. Everything that goes into the latest edition is checked and double checked, including the practicality of the illustrations. That is why Tuppy spent Saturday morning with a priapic young man, a box of condoms, a polaroid and a smile on her face. All in the interest of research, you understand; we're trying to illustrate various methods of how best to apply condoms without the usual embarrassing lull in lovemaking, where foil crackling, rubber fumbling and oil slicked fingers tend to somewhat detract from the action. Now, Tuppy, being the resourceful type figured the best way to provide our artist with a set of roughs from which to work, was to take a series of still life polaroids of condoms being apply to this hapless guy's dick. We all agreed that this sounded like a good idea — it was just a shame that it took *all* morning. The poor guy stumbled out exhausted! Tuppy's rather feeble excuse for her absence from duty, was that 'sex and photography don't mix' — whatever she meant by that . . . worse still, she hid the photographs, much to the dismay of her professionally inquisitive staff.

Sunday afternoon was supposed to be put aside for the 365 sex positions, prepared and drawn by the elusive Jake, who never seems to be in when phoned, and "Hasn't even started them yet" according to inside information. "Ah, well, I've had flu," was his last pathetic attempt at fobbing us off.

Sod that, we thought, we'll do them ourselves. Unfortunately, our combined artistic talents don't amount to much, and the resulting illustrations, as well as being totally unintelligible, only bore the vaguest resemblance to the acts they were supposed to depict. An accurate caption for one of our more memorable disasters would be: "Mr Badly Drawn inserts his six fingers into an ambulatory beefburger, whilst attacking a large, disembodied mouth with his four foot long prick." Back to the drawing board, and get well soon Jake!

Opening night at the Maitress Club.

One thing we are good at, though, is organizing space allocation for the various events we list in the Diary. For instance, Boxing Day has been rescheduled in 1988. It now falls on December 27th, pushed back by the Annual Lesbian Bikers' Christmas Feast which falls on the 26th. You've got to get your priorities right. (Actually, things did get a little out of hand when, in a space-saving frenzy, we decided to cram all the religious festivals and saints' days into a particularly dull week in mid-February.)

By Sunday evening, the mountains of rejected drawings and dislocated calender events had spilled from our office into the corridor to mingle with the as yet unopened pile of post from Saturday. Our usual fare of magazines, newsletters and postcards was highlighted this week by the arrival of the new, 'hard-core' US Swingers' contact magazine *Odyssey* and its hilarious selection of home snaps of overweight sex pots simulating ecstasy as their every orifice is plugged with dick, dildo or finger, in an attempt to attract other like-minded enthusiasts to join their swinging circles. To tell you the truth, *dangling* would be a more appropriate adjective to describe this mottley crew of salami dicks and melon tits, but there you go — each to his/her own, I suppose.

> **"The little bastard proceeded to happily gambol through the filing cabinet leaving brochures strewn around the lobby. As its *pièce de résistance*, it pissed all over the world atlas, unknowingly creating a new land mass — the incontinent continent (sorry)."**

Anyway, back to the Diary. It's late on Sunday night, and I've just finished putting captions to the weekly wanking positions. God, I figure that any money I've earned doing this job is going to go on a lengthy debriefing with a good psychiatrist — I can't stop thinking in double entendres — Napoleon pulls his Bonaparte — Fakir orgasm, pulling your weight — when's it going to stop?

Now, Tuppy's just whisked past with her Führer head on. It's strange, the majority of the time in this place is spent either recovering from the day before, or getting ready for the night ahead. The changeover period, that brief lull of normality — about an hour a day, is the time when the work really gets done and if we're not working then, the shit really hits the fan.

Seeing as the deadline is creeping inexorably nearer by the minute, we've still to test another fifteen condoms, the artwork is still waiting for Jake and everybody is rapidly cracking up, I suppose she's got every reason to start wielding the whip.

So, it's back on the phone to our man in Bangkok, dish out the Durexes, have another Tequila and try to get a couple of hours kip before tomorrow's mayhem, mishaps and madness. I can hear the plaintive cry of our typist now; "Don't worry Tuppy, it'll be done by tomorrow."

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

Firmly ensconced in her role as healer of inferiority complexes, massager of bruised egos and disseminator of arcane advice, BETTE NOIRE, B.Sex (Hons), M.Sex (Distinction), P.45, battles on. Why the crusade to bring light and enlightenment to the world? Well, partly it's out of the goodness of her heart, but mostly it's because her projected book on blow jobs in a monetarist economy was turned down and she needs the money.

Q: Is it true that female breasts increase in size with a lot of handling and, er, other attentions? — L.B., (Hammersmith).

A: Pull the other one . . . no, don't. If there's any increase, it's small and temporary — they also alter (likewise temporarily) with the menstrual cycle. But if you're looking to change a 34A to a 34D, only a plastic surgeon can do that!

Q: Can you tell me something about male orgasm? How many contractions does one normally have? Which ones are the strongest? — J.K., (Toxteth).

Lord, this mania for measurement!! For most of you, the first few twitches feel just fine, but it seems to be the feeling of the amount of fluid during ejaculation that makes you the happiest — so your first contractions are the most forceful. Now . . . will you guys out there forget the numbers racket? Orgasms can vary with men just as they can for women! You don't hear us muttering 'four . . . five . . . six' under our breath, do you?

Q: I can't seem to ejaculate unless I've had a lot of sexual stimulation. Needless to say, it requires a lot of endurance on my girlfriend's part. Too much, I think, and it's causing a bit of strain, one way or another. Can you help speed things up? — E.H., (Hants).

A: Laddie, it sounds to me like you've got too much of a good thing going! There are a lot of different reasons for that sort of thing. Some men don't let themselves go with a partner for fear of somehow 'giving in' — others hold back because they can't commit themselves, even sexually — that's a common one. You'll have to do some thinking, and see how you really feel. You don't mention whether or not this has occurred with your other lady friends: is this a pattern?

Another thing — sometimes some specific something has happened which throws a spanner into the works, like being interrupted when you were young, either while you were masturbating or having sex. Reflexes repeating themselves (to the reverse effect), if you like! You also don't say how often you have sex — if it's every day, you could be overtaxing yourself, you know!

What to do! Explain the problem to your lady. She'll understand, or she isn't worth having! More foreplay's in order, especially more hand or mouthwork around the balls. Lots of stimulation before entering, up to the point of orgasm. Only if all this fails, consider a bit of counselling — but there's a lot to work on before you need to think of that.

Q: Is it possible for a woman to climax while being kissed on the ear? My girlfriend says it is . . . — A.W., (Chester).

A: Talk about earogenous! Yes, it's possible, all right, although not that common. Lucky lady — bring on the sweet nothings!

Q: I find that women tend to lose concentration easily when we make love. They say it isn't me, it's general noise, or other things. Do you think women do become distracted more easily? — L.V., (Surbiton).

A: Well, in the animal kingdom, it quite often is the female which is more likely to be disturbed — they're not sure why, but I suspect it's something to do with extra-protective antennae, watching out for the young and all. Assuming your lovemaking techniques don't put everyone to sleep, you might want to either soundproof your bedroom walls, or tell your ladies to concentrate on erotic fantasies, if the going gets noisy . . . and watch the crumbs in the sheets . . .

Q: I've never had a fantasy! Sounds crazy, I know, but I've tried reading porn, seeing porn — nothing. I'd like to expand my sexual repertoire in this area, but don't know what else to do. Help! — M.W., (Barnet).

A: Not all people are visually oriented, my pet. If, with your past sexual experiences, books and film, nothing comes (except you), you're probably just one of those people who aren't. So don't force things. But fantasies can also be experiences in the form of feelings, not just images. If you react to physical sensations more than to images, try to imagine your body being stimulated, as well as the feeling you'd have as you're getting excited. Oh, yum. Fantasy is in no way necessary for a terrific sex life, so just concentrate on enjoying yourself (and whoever the company is)! Bring out the raspberry massage oil . . .

Q: Will you settle an argument for us? In the morning I wake up with a terrific hard-on. She says it's because I have to go to the bathroom, but I say it's a build up of sperm in the night. — F.D., (St. Andrews).

A: . . . and if you don't release it, you'll explode, right? I wouldn't try that one on, John. As a matter of fact, you both lose, so just enjoy making up. They used to think erections were caused by bladder pressure, but now they think it's just a side effect of a stage of sleep called REM (Rapid Eye Movement). It can happen three to five times a night . . . sort of nocturnal calisthenics. Stun 'em at cocktail parties with that one . . .

Q: I get a kick out of watching women and me have sex with a lot of mirrors reflecting our bodies. But sometimes they complain that I'm obsessed because I don't just rely on the sensation of touch to get aroused. — P.O., (Loughton).

A: Good Lord, what do these women do, stick with shutting their eyes and using the Braille method? And who says it takes only one kind of sense to get going? It seems to me that if you couldn't come without those mirrors, you'd have a teensy problem. But if all they do is just add to the total feeling, then I'd say, get glassy eyed . . .

Now, it's possible your women are feeling ignored. Are you detached as you watch yourselves? Well, then . . . they may just feel like stand-ins! Otherwise, explain to your lovelies that mirrors are erotic window-dressing for you, that a lot of sex is visual, and reassure them of your feelings. They just might want to know that your interest in those things isn't just a reflection on them . . .

NOTE: For all my courageous lads out there who are sending in your questions, hooray for you and big wet kisses to you all. For those of you cowards who aren't, do I have to get out my teeny tiny little paddle and come after you? (That includes *you*, European readers!)

Problem? Reasonable questions answered. If unreasonable, they'll either get trashed or passed around for a smirk or a laugh in the office! Write to: What's Your Problem? Knave, P.O. Box 312, Witham, Essex CM8 3SZ.